

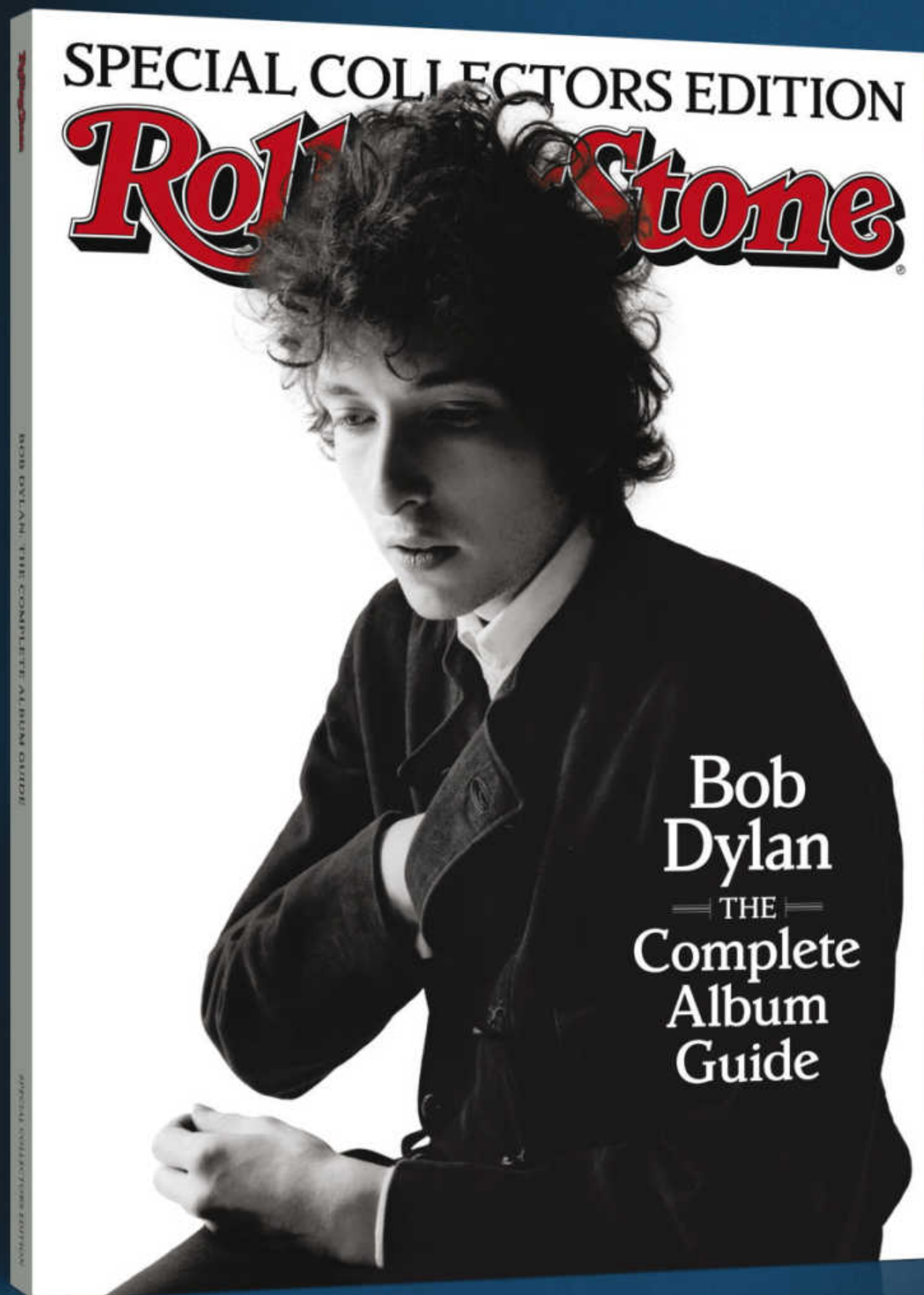
EL CHAPO FOUND

A SECRET VISIT
WITH THE
WORLD'S MOST
WANTED MAN

BY SEAN PENN

Leo's Crusade

His Toughest Role,
and a Mission to
Save the Planet



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SPECIAL REPORT

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Lemmy
Kilmister,
1945-2015.
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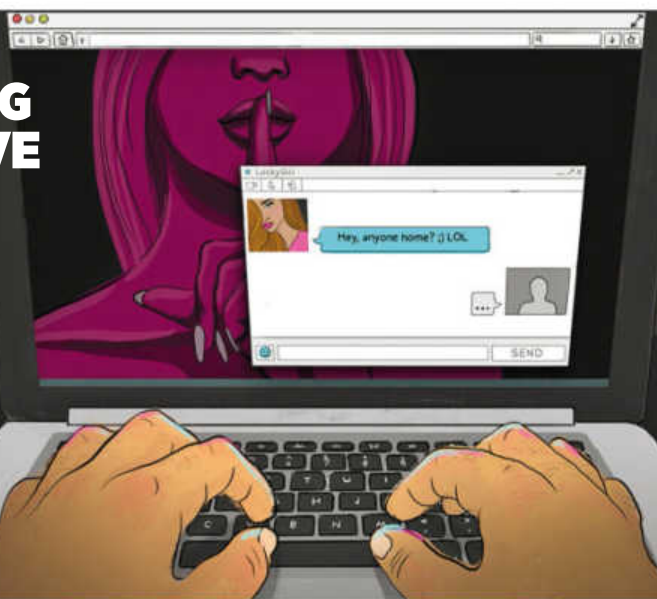
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FEATURE

AMONG THE LOVE BOTS

Meet the lovelorn marks falling prey to one of today's biggest online scams: artificially intelligent dating-service accounts used to seduce people into paying for premium service.



TUNE IN TO OUR PODCAST

Don't miss the launch of our new podcast, featuring artist interviews, what's playing in the office and more! Arriving January 25th in the iTunes store and on RollingStone.com



LAKE STREET DIVE RETURN

The Boston band talks about its new album, *Side Pony* (due out February 19th), which combines their usual jazz swing and Motown sound with rock & roll and disco.



WU-TANG GO HOLLYWOOD

RZA says the "wheels are in motion" for an O'Jays biopic covering the late Wu-Tang Clan member's wild life. Read our interview for more details on the project.

360 DEGREES OF COUNTRY!

Come to Rolling Stone Country for daily news, video and reviews on Nashville and beyond. We talk to Hank Williams Jr. about his new album, *It's About Time*, and the role of his famous father, Hank Williams, in the Grand Ole Opry. "He's the king of the whole thing, baby," says Williams. Powered by Ram.

ALL THIS AND MORE AT
ROLLINGSTONE.COM/RAMREPORT

Hank Williams Jr.

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Correspondence

Love Letters
& Advice



Power of the Force

AN ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL story ["Wars Without End," RS 1250/1251]. I've been a *Star Wars* fanatic since *Return of the Jedi* opened in theaters. Brian Hiatt's piece brought back amazing memories, and it was very cool to get inside the minds of cast and crew, old and new. I love Mark Hamill, but I don't think *The Force Awakens* will change people's lives the way the first three did.

Shane Holley, Lakeland, TX

BRIAN HIATT IS THE PERFECT combo of reporter and fan. As soon as I finished his cover story, I wanted to see *The Force Awakens*, then come home and geek out on the other six flicks. Thanks for destroying my weekend!

Barbara Hamilton
Via the Internet

A GREAT READ. HAMILL'S words prove he's a wise Jedi master in real life.

Bob Johnson, via the Internet

GLAD THAT HAMILL, HARRISON Ford and Carrie Fisher are excited about assuming their old *Star Wars* roles, but I can't get enthused about a cherished childhood franchise getting merchandised to death. Think I'll put on Terry Gilliam's *Time Bandits* instead.

Stephen Conn
Las Cruces, NM

A Radical History

In RS 1250/1251, historian Sean Wilentz wrote about the rightward march of the GOP and how the 2016 presidential election should be viewed as a battle for the soul of the country ["The Turning Point"]. ROLLING STONE readers responded.

AN EXTRAORDINARILY concise history of how the jousting between Democrats and the GOP, and between moderate and radical-right Republicans, has played out in national politics since the 1960s. Wilentz has clarified the profound implications of the upcoming presidential election.

Gwenn Levine
Woodcliff Lake, NJ

ENJOYED THE STORY, but I noted a couple of missing details. Ross Perot's contribution to shaving off the Republican vote in 1992 was left out. Wilentz claims Gore might've won Florida if the court permitted a full recount, but Gore never asked for one.

Henno Heitur
Hailey, ID

WILENTZ NEEDS TO DIAL it back a few clicks. He and Donald Trump are on

opposite sides of the same apocalyptic coin.

Jeff Christenson, Boise, ID

WE'RE GOING TO NEED A huge turnout of women, minority and LGBT voters to keep the country from head-



ing down a road I have no desire to travel.

Mark Mahoney, Seal Beach, CA

THIS IS A CRITICAL ELECTION year. But it won't be easy to vote: Restrictive voter-ID laws will disproportionately affect minorities, the poor and those likely to cast ballots for Democrats.

Robert Ray, via the Internet

The Statesman

I WAS STRUCK BY JEFF Goodell's powerful interview with the secretary of state ["The Fight of Our Time," RS 1250/1251]. John Kerry has proved a gifted diplomat, placing himself in the center of the most intractable political crises, including the most urgent one: global climate change.

Mary Louise Day
Via the Internet

GOODELL AND KERRY GIVE short shrift to the most significant factor responsible for the world's poverty, instability, ter-

rorism, climate disasters and refugee crisis: the glaring effects of overpopulation. We haven't the luxury of dawdling if there's to be a future for our children.

David L. Allred
Redding, CA

AGAINST ALL ODDS AND DESPITE a powerful anti-science campaign, the Paris climate talks concluded with a groundbreaking agreement signed by nearly 200 countries. Thank you, John Kerry. I'm proud to be an American.

Phyllis Rose
Via the Internet

The Best of 2015

I'M A LONGTIME FAN OF THE magazine's year-end lists, but I almost never agree with them. This year was different [Albums of the Year, RS 1250/1251]. Kendrick Lamar, D'Angelo and the Weeknd in the top 10 are spot on. All three made game-changing records. My only beef: *No Cities to Love* at Number 11.

Neil Adams, via the Internet

WAIT, YOU PUT TAME IMPALA's "Let It Happen" so far down the Top 25? Tell me what single was better last year.

Victoria Byrd, via the Internet

Bowie's Comeback

DAVID BOWIE HAS DONE IT again ["Bowie's Newest Surprise," RS 1250/1251]. He totally moved away from what we would expect from his next body of work. We had a taste with "Blackstar" and "Sue (Or in a Season of Crime)," but I am totally intrigued with the rest of the album.

John Haley
Blackpool, England

Rock and Terror

THE MAGAZINE'S POIGNANT account of the Paris terrorist attacks reminded me that any one of us could have been standing vulnerably at the edge of the Bataclan stage that evening ["After the Nightmare," RS 1250/1251]. Hats off to singer Jesse Hughes for committing to playing live again.

Elliot Goodman
Via the Internet

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THE PEOPLE v. O.J. SIMPSON

A M E R I C A N C R I M E S T O R Y

FEB 2
TUES 10 **FX**

The Playlist

OUR FAVORITE SONGS, FILMS AND VIDEOS RIGHT NOW



1. Radiohead "Spectre"

The band says this lush, spooky ballad was meant for the latest James Bond movie. It got beaten by a Sam Smith song – tough break! But it's a real beaut, with echoes of 2001's "Pyramid Song."

2. Santigold "Who Be Lovin' Me"

A sweet, hazy summer jam featuring Atlanta's ILoveMakonnen on bliss-zonked guest vocals. Lovin' it!



3. David Bowie "Girl Loves Me"

This tensely coiled groove is our favorite moment on Bowie's wild new *Blackstar* album – it's dark, trippy and sexy in ways only he can pull off.

4. Bono "Every Breaking Wave" (YouTube)

"Every Breaking Wave" sounded great on U2's tour this past year, but it's even more powerful in this simple acoustic performance with Glen Hansard, Hozier and others at a Dublin busking event for charity.



5. Weaves "Drag Me Down"

This Toronto psych-rock crew was one of the best bands we saw at last fall's CMJ music festival, and its new One Direction cover is delightfully strange.

6. The 1975 "Ugh!"

These Manchester blokes are the easiest, breeziest British band since Duran Duran. Check out the hooks on this refreshing pop-rock blast to see what we mean.



7. Alabama Shakes "Gimme All Your Love" (live)

Brittany Howard kicks the jams all the way out in this killer *Austin City Limits* rendition of a highlight from last year's *Sound & Color* album.



MY LIST



Rick Nielsen

Five Songs I Wish I'd Written

With Cheap Trick elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, we asked the band's guitarist to talk songwriting.

The Nazz

"Open My Eyes"

A great early power-pop song – not too syrupy, kind of noisy. It's like a bugle waking you up. Later on, it inspired me to write "Hello There."

The Raspberries

"Go All the Way"

All the parts fit: There's not too much bridge, and the chorus doesn't repeat too many times. It's exciting.

Dave Clark 5

"Glad All Over"

Today the drum parts would be toned down – they're too loud. But why? They're a signature part of the song.

Small Faces

"Whatcha Gonna Do About It"

So simple that it probably wouldn't make sense if anyone else did it – but there's Steve Marriott wailing, and the guy is just so convincing.

Oasis

"The Shock of the Lightning"

The riff goes on and on, and Liam Gallagher just snarls. We play this song at our shows before we go onstage. It puts me in the mood to rock.



**THAT JUST
BRUSHED
CLEAN
FEELING**

when the spicy take-out
is putting the brakes
on the make-out.



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Rock & Roll

Guns n' Roses' Miracle Reunion

Axl Rose, Slash and Duff McKagan come together for Coachella – and maybe more

BY ANDY GREENE

BEFORE SOME SCREENINGS OF “STAR WARS: THE Force Awakens” in December, a mysterious teaser popped onscreen, with a snatch of “Welcome to the Jungle” playing over footage of rock-concert crowds. It was the first solid hint that months of improbable-seeming rumors were true: Axl Rose, Slash and [Cont. on 12]

Rose and
Slash in
1991

GEORGE CHIN/ICONPIX

GN'R: THE COLD WAR ERA

Before the reunion, there were years of feuds, bad blood and Buckethead

JULY 1993

The *Use Your Illusion* tour, which was marred by late starts and riots, wraps up with a show at Estadio River Plate in Buenos Aires. It's the last time Slash and Matt Sorum play with **AXL ROSE** onstage.



OCTOBER 1996

SLASH announces his departure, five years after the band last released an album of original material. "It was all about Axl wanting control to the point where the rest of us felt strangled," he later wrote.



AUGUST 1997



DUFF MCKAGAN quits, leaving Rose as the only original member left in the group. "I told [Axl], 'Enough is enough,'" McKagan said. "This band is a dictatorship, and I don't see myself playing in those conditions. Find someone else."

JANUARY 2001

Guns n' Roses begin playing with a new lineup, including guitarist **BUCKETHEAD**. Slash attempts to see them in Vegas but isn't allowed in. "I was curious," he said. "But [the band] found out, and it was major pandemonium."



NOVEMBER 2002

Opening night of the group's first North American tour in a decade ends in a riot when Axl doesn't show. The entire tour is canceled after he fails to make it to another gig weeks later. GN'R don't play again for another four years.



NOVEMBER 2008

After 14 years of work, GN'R release *Chinese Democracy*, which earns four stars in *ROLLING STONE*. A few months later, Rose says of Slash, "I consider him a cancer...and the less heard of him or his supporters, the better."

APRIL 2012

Guns n' Roses are inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Axl pens a letter explaining why he isn't going to come. "Let sleeping dogs lie or lying dogs sleep," he wrote. "Time to move on. People get divorced. Life doesn't owe you your own personal happy ending." The remaining members, minus Stradlin, perform at the ceremony with vocal-ist Myles Kennedy.

GUNS N' ROSES

[Cont. from 11] Duff McKagan were about to reunite onstage as Guns n' Roses for the first time in 23 years.

Confirmation came in January, when GN'R – with Slash and McKagan – were announced as Saturday headliners for 2016's Coachella in Indio, California. The band called it "the most significant and anxiously awaited musical event of this century." A report in *Billboard* suggested that a 25-date stadium tour would follow, but Guns' reps wouldn't confirm that.

With the rest of the line-up unannounced, the big question for fans was whether any other past members of Guns

– *Appetite for Destruction*-era drummer Steven Adler, *Use Your Illusion*-era drummer Matt Sorum, and guitarist Izzy Stradlin – will be involved. ("You never know," Sorum tells *ROLLING STONE*.) At press time, latter-day touring keyboardist Chris Pittman was the only other confirmed musician, though social-media posts suggested keyboardist Dizzy Reed (who joined in 1990) and drummer Frank Ferrer (who joined in 2006), might also be on board.

Since 2006, Rose has played nearly 300 concerts with his new version of Guns n' Roses, who also recorded 2008's long-in-the-works *Chinese Democracy*. McKagan, Slash and Sorum, meanwhile, formed Velvet Revolver with the late Scott Weiland.

Stradlin and McKagan have played with Rose's new Guns over the years, but Rose and Slash seemed to have irreconcilable differences: "One of the two of us will die before a reunion," Rose said in 2009. The first sign of a thaw came last year, when Slash confirmed the two were speaking again: "It's very cool to dispel some of that negative stuff," he said.

But decades of enmity – and Slash-free Guns tours – seem unlikely to dampen demand for one of the most anticipated rock reunions ever. "They were one of the greatest all-time bands," says New York concert promoter John Scher. "I don't think that Axl has sullied the name so badly that actual fans won't want to come back." 🐘

The Road Back

How Eagles of Death Metal found the strength to tour again after the Paris attacks, with a little help from Bono

BY KORY GROW

IF I GET EMOTIONAL, I APOLOGIZE,” says Eagles of Death Metal frontman Jesse Hughes one recent afternoon. “It’s not in a bad way.” Hughes is still dealing with the aftermath of November 13th, when an Eagles concert in Paris became the site of one of the worst terrorist attacks in recent history. Now, the veteran garage-rock band is facing the big question: What’s next?

At least part of the answer has become clear: Get back on the road. Starting in February, Eagles of Death Metal, who had postponed all remaining concerts on their fall tour after the Paris attacks, will hit Europe for 24 dates – what they’ve dubbed the *Nos Amis Tour* (French for “our friends”) in a nod to the group’s affection for France. The tour includes a performance in Paris on February 16th, and the band plans to announce North American dates soon. The Eagles hope the European dates will be the beginning of two years on the road, but, says a source close to the band, “We’re taking it kind of one step at a time – there’s no road map for a situation like this.”

After the attacks, the band could barely contemplate getting onstage again. But an outpouring of support from fans and peers gave them strength to come back. Perhaps the strongest encouragement came from U2, who had postponed a Paris concert originally scheduled for the same weekend the attacks took place. Less than a month later, U2 returned to Paris, welcoming Eagles of Death Metal onstage for the final two songs of the night, including a cover of Patti Smith’s “People Have the Power.” Then U2 ceded the stage to the Eagles, who played the feel-good “I Love You All the Time,” from their 2015 album, *Zipper Down*. For Hughes, the evening was “a beautiful way of putting the training wheels on for performing.”

“I wish I knew what [words] to put together to explain how I felt,” says Josh Homme, Eagles co-founder and Queens of the Stone Age frontman, who watched it online (Homme, who does not always tour with the Eagles, wasn’t present the night



LEARNING TO FLY AGAIN Above: Hughes (left) and Homme. Below: Bono and Hughes onstage at a U2 concert in Paris on December 7th.



of the attack and did not attend the U2 show). “Can you imagine how tough that was for them?”

Before U2 and the Eagles played together, Bono called Hughes and prayed with him on the phone. “He knows that I’m a Christian, and he also knows I’m a mama’s boy,” Hughes says, sounding close to tears. “The very next day [after the attack], a courier came with a phone that had a note that said, ‘This is from Bono. Make sure you call your mom.’ I thought that was awesome. It was the first time I really got to talk to my mom without being in a police station, and that meant the whole world to me.”

U2 weren’t the only big-name band to offer crucial support. *Zipper Down* features a cover of Duran Duran’s 1982 hit “Save a Prayer”; and after the Paris tragedy, frontman Simon Le Bon decided to donate all royalties Duran Duran gets from sales of the song to charity. Hughes and Homme were so moved by the gesture that they followed Le Bon’s cue, asking some fellow performers to cover Eagles of Death

Metal’s “I Love You All the Time” for what they’re calling the Play It Forward campaign; all proceeds from sales of the song will go to the Sweet Stuff Foundation, which has offered assistance to victims of the Paris attacks. Kings of Leon, Imagine Dragons, Florence and the Machine (who collaborated with the Maccabees) and My Morning Jacket, among others, have all covered the song.

“Everyone takes something from the song and made it their own,” Homme says. “Florence and the Machine’s version with the Maccabees has a Celtic druther to it, too, and then [Pearl Jam drummer] Matt Cameron did an almost electronic, night-scape, futuristic version of it. And Ed Harcourt’s version is a tear-jerker.”

The band expects to release a new batch of Play It Forward covers sometime this month. “I had no idea how eager and how sincere the response would be,” Hughes says. “As someone who really, really needed this shit personally, I couldn’t feel more accomplished in our goal. There’s a lot of emotion behind this stuff for us, and I think it’s an emotion that’s bigger than words.”



SUNFLOWER
POWER Cumming,
Faber and Kivlen
(from left)

Hot Psych Rock, Live From New York

How Sunflower Bean turned their love of Pink Floyd, Zeppelin and the Velvet into a killer debut

GROWING UP ON LONG ISLAND, NICK KIVLEN AND JACOB FABER HARDLY knew any other kids at their high school who listened to rock & roll. “You don’t know that rock exists in this age unless someone shows you,” says Faber, 20. But they found it: Kivlen, also 20, obsessed over Metallica and Minor Threat before discovering Obama-era indie (“The first Beach Fossils album changed my life,” he says), while Faber, a talented jazz saxophonist, realized it was more fun to drum along to Nirvana records. By the summer after they graduated in 2013, they were gigging around New York as Sunflower Bean, with Kivlen on guitar and vocals and Faber behind the kit. The band took off after adding singer and bassist Julia Cumming, a kindred spirit from Manhattan who loved Seventies glam and lost-years Brian Wilson. “I like *Smiley Smile* better than *Smile*, to be honest,” says Cumming, 19. “I know a lot of Beach Boys fans would want to fight me about it.”

Sunflower Bean’s full-length debut, *Human Ceremony*, reflects those influences and more, whirling with glee through decades of sweet riffs and psychedelic thrills. When I meet the band members at a Brooklyn club, they debate their favorite debuts, with Led Zeppelin, the Velvet Underground and Pink Floyd all in contention. Later, Cumming points out that she’s wearing a T. Rex T-shirt. “I have a T. Rex tattoo, too,” she says with a laugh. “It’s, like, *levels*.”

While playing with Sunflower Bean, Cumming has built a second career as a model, appearing in shoots for Yves Saint Laurent and others. “I’ve been extremely lucky,” she says. “But ultimately, that isn’t my dream. I’ve wanted to be a musician ever since I saw the glam-rock VHS tape my dad put in for me when I was a baby.”

SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

R&B

BRYSON TILLER: THE GODFATHER OF ‘TRAPSOUL’

Late in 2014, Bryson Tiller got a call from Timbaland. The producer, who had heard Tiller’s SoundCloud hit “Don’t,” told him to quit his job at Papa John’s and fly to Miami to work on new songs. “That was when I knew this could be a career,” says the Kentucky singer, 23. Soon he was fielding competing offers to sign with Drake’s OVO label or RCA, which ended up releasing Tiller’s syrupy, sexy debut, *Trap Soul*, in October. “It was a hard decision, for real,” Tiller says. “For Drake to reach out early and say he liked my music was crazy.”

BRITTANY SPANOS



Tiller

BOTTOM: JOHNNY NUNEZ/GETTY IMAGES

Lemmy Kilmister

Remembering the Motörhead frontman, who lived as hard and fast as his band played

BY DAVID BROWNE

THE DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS, Lemmy Kilmister's doctor visited the Motörhead frontman at his condo in West Hollywood to deliver some bad news. Kilmister, who had been slurring his words lately, learned he'd been diagnosed with terminal brain and neck cancer. At most, he had six months to live.

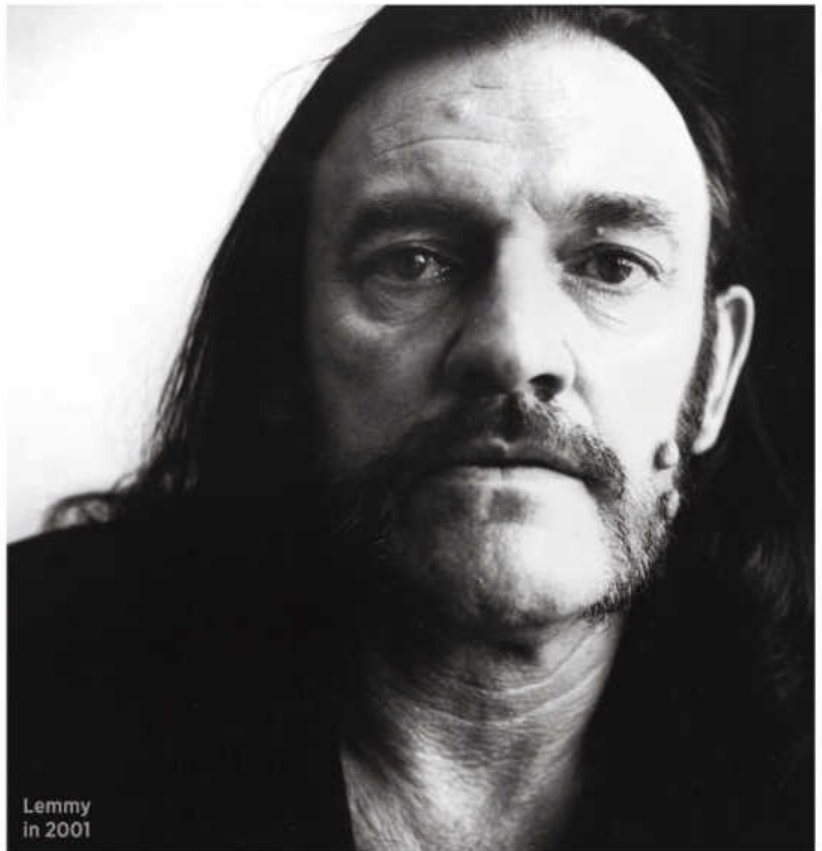
Kilmister took the news well – soon, he was cracking jokes and playing video games. Then, on December 28th, he nodded off and never woke up. He was 70. “I don’t know how he was able to go so quick,” says Todd Singerman, his manager. “He must have willed himself and said, ‘Fuck this.’ He did it on his terms, once again.”

From his loud, fast, uncompromising music to his mythic drug and alcohol use, Kilmister did everything his way. As founder, bassist and gargoyle-voiced leader of Motörhead, he exerted a massive influence over four decades of heavy metal. “Lemmy is probably one of the absolute primary reasons I wanted to be in a band,” says Metallica’s Lars Ulrich. “In 1979, I was in a record store and the double-bass intro to ‘Overkill’ started. I never heard anything like that in my life. This music took me to a place I had never been.” After hearing of Kilmister’s death, Dave Grohl, a close friend, had an ace of spades tattooed on his wrist, a tribute to Motörhead’s most popular song.

One of rock & roll’s most memorable characters, Kilmister lived like a pirate, dressed like a biker, never covered his protruding facial moles and didn’t suffer fools. (Interviewer: “You don’t believe in God?” Lemmy: “I believe I’ll have a drink.”) A collector of all kinds of war memorabilia, he stuffed his apartment with Nazi paraphernalia, including Eva Braun’s hairbrush, though his interest was purely historical. “I only collect the stuff – I didn’t collect the ideas,” he once said. (Singerman says at least part of that collection will be donated to museums.)

Yet despite his hard-boiled persona, Kilmister had a warm, hospitable side. He was known for giving cash to friends (and strangers) who were down on their luck, and for welcoming young musicians into his fold. “He was a parental figure – someone you felt completely safe with,” Ulrich says. “You were never judged.”

Born in 1945 in Staffordshire, England, the son of a minister and a librarian, Lemmy was raised in North Wales and was swept up in rock & roll early on: He caught the Beatles at the Cavern Club and worked briefly as a roadie for Jimi Hendrix. In 1971, he joined the prog-rock band Hawkwind. Although he and co-founder Dave Brock would remain friends until Lemmy’s death, Kilmister was kicked out of the band in 1975, due to a drug bust in Canada and his epic speed use. “He’d be up for a few days and then



fall asleep,” says Brock. “He’d be sitting up in bed with his book, and he’d fall asleep with his eyes open. I would think, ‘Fucking hell – has he died?’ He got to 70, and I didn’t think he’d get to 50.”

Kilmister quickly rebounded, forming his own band. The group almost called itself Bastard, before finally settling on Motörhead. On classic albums like 1980’s *Ace of Spades* and the 1981 live epic *No Sleep ‘Til Hammersmith*, Motörhead formed a missing link between metal and punk. (Kilmister later boasted that he helped teach Sid Vicious how to play bass.) Over the course of 22 albums, several personnel changes and even a Grammy (in 2005), the band’s brutal sound hardly wavered. “Lemmy was never a sellout,” says director Penelope Spheeris, who featured Kilmister in the 1988 doc *The Decline of Western Civilization Part II: The Metal Years*. “Nobody else sounded like that. You always knew it was a Motörhead song.”

As longtime friend Ozzy Osbourne learned when he and Motörhead toured the States together in 1981, Motörhead were as relentless backstage as they were onstage. “I remember saying to Lemmy at one point, ‘Do you ever sleep?’” Osbourne recalls. “And he goes, ‘Well, not much.’ I go, ‘When was the last time you slept?’ He said, ‘Let me think. Ten, 12 days ago.’ They’d walk around with

bourbon all the time. I was hitting it pretty hard as well, but nothing like them. They put a new fucking meaning to partying.”

Kilmister was unrepentant about his lifestyle. “There’s a lot of shit talked about what’s bad for you, especially in America,” he told *ROLLING STONE* in 2009. “Everyone wants to be safe. Well, I got news for you: You can’t be safe. Life’s not safe. Your work isn’t safe. When you leave the house, it isn’t safe. The air you breathe isn’t going to be safe, not for very long. That’s why you have to enjoy the moment.”

In 1990, Kilmister moved to Los Angeles, within walking distance of his favorite hangout, the Rainbow Bar and Grill, where he became such a fixture that no one else was allowed to sit in his chair. “He was always in a booth with a lot of gor-

“I asked Lemmy, ‘When was the last time you slept?’” says Ozzy Osbourne. “He said, ‘10, 12 days ago.’ Motörhead gave a new meaning to partying.”

geous women around him, looking like he was the king of the world,” Sphेरis recalls.

Motörhead toured and recorded regularly – their latest album, *Bad Magic*, was released last year – but Lemmy’s health became an issue. He’d long suffered from diabetes. To ward off heart arrhythmia, a cardioverter defibrillator was implanted in his chest in 2013. He continued taking speed every day nearly right up until his death, but in one concession to aging, he switched from several packs of cigarettes a day to one a week and gave up Jack Daniel’s for vodka and orange juice, telling Singerman, “Orange juice is good for you.”

Last September, an infection in Lemmy’s lungs forced Motörhead to cancel shows. “I texted and said, ‘Just stop for a while,’” says Brock. “He wrote back, ‘Oh, don’t worry about me – I’m all right.’” Lemmy roused himself to continue touring, playing a final show in Berlin last December. (Plans to release a DVD of two of his last concerts are in the works.) Two days later, he attended his 70th-birthday party at an L.A. club, where he was feted by Ulrich, Slash, Duff McKagan, Billy Idol and others. Looking weak and thin, he didn’t join any of the other musicians onstage.

Yet it’s the other image of Lemmy – indefatigable, fearless, seemingly invincible – that will remain. “We used to have a standing joke with each other: ‘Which one of us is going to go first?’” remembers Osbourne. “He said to me one time, ‘What’s the point of living to 99 if you’re not enjoying it? It’s my life and I want to have fun with it.’”

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY KORY GROW



Natalie Cole

She escaped her father’s shadow and won nine Grammys – but dark times were never far off

AS THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND LEARNED, THERE WAS MORE to Natalie Cole than sweet ballads. At a benefit in 2011, she joined the band for three songs – including, at her request, “Whipping Post.” “We were like, ‘That’s odd – but cool,’” recalls guitarist Warren Haynes. “She said, ‘I’m a rocker at heart’ – and she killed it.”

Cole, who died of heart failure on December 31st at 65, was first known as the daughter of Nat “King” Cole, who died when she was 15. In college, she worked toward a pre-med degree, but eventually followed in her father’s footsteps, earning a Grammy for Best New Artist with her first single, 1975’s “This Will Be.” Her impressive, young-Aretha pipes led to more hits, including “Sophisticated Lady” and a cover of Bruce Springsteen’s “Pink Cadillac.” “When she did all those crazy high vocals in ‘I’ve Got Love on My Mind,’ it gave me chills,” says longtime friend Patti LaBelle. “She never walked in her father’s shadow.”

But Cole also had a dark side. Before she was famous, she battled heroin addiction and worked the streets of Harlem for a pimp (she was, in her words, “the come-on girl, the cutie pie who would pique the attention of potential johns”). In the early Eighties, she was addicted to cocaine. “I think the drugs were just waiting to happen,” she wrote in her memoir, “a culmination of not having resolved things in my life. My father’s death was the beginning...” Cole eventually checked into rehab, and her 1991 album, *Unforgettable... With Love*, featuring a posthumous collaboration with her father on his hit “Unforgettable,” won a Grammy for Album of the Year.

Recently, Cole battled hepatitis C and kidney disease and had a kidney transplant. Before her death, she was hoping to record a raw, Chess-style blues album with producer Don Was, who oversaw one of her last sessions: a duet with Van Morrison for his most recent album. “There was a sweetness and excitement in her voice,” Was says. “She had a real spark to her, and Van was knocked out by it. Some people have that power.”

DAVID BROWNE

PETER POWER/TORONTO STAR/GETTY IMAGES

Erykah Badu: Born Again

How the restless R&B dreamer hit a new groove by covering Drake, helping deliver babies and singing love songs with her ex

BY SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

ON A QUIET SIDE STREET IN Brooklyn's Fort Greene neighborhood – a few short blocks from the Barclays Center, and right above a natural-hair salon – is the low-rise red-brick building where Erykah Badu has lived on and off since the mid-Nineties. Walk up to the second floor and follow the vintage funk beats down a narrow carpeted corridor, and you'll find her place: a cozy two-bedroom artist's pad that radiates warmth and soul. "You can sit over there," says the singer, gesturing at a futon in one corner of her living room after her younger sister and assistant lets me in. "I don't have a lot of chairs."

For nearly 20 years, Badu has been one of R&B's boldest innovators – a hippie dreamer, Earth goddess, Afrofuturist seer, proud mama and occasional pop star. Her whole history is here in this room, where a king mattress occupies much of the floor, next to an orange Fender guitar, a waist-high ankh sculpture and an ancient-looking four-track recording console. Colorful fabric hangings, psychedelic album art, painted portraits of Badu and dorm-style posters of Bruce Lee and a toking Bob Marley decorate every inch of the walls. "André 3000 drew this," she says, pointing to an Afroed angel sketched directly onto one wall in pink and blue pastels, next to the word "Seven" – the name of her 18-year-old son with the Outkast musician, whom she dated in the late Nineties. "All of my babies have toddled through here over the years. I try to keep it dusted." She shrugs. "Sometimes I can't."

Sitting cross-legged on a purple-and-gold floor pillow, her famous olive-green eyes glittering from beneath the brim of a gray felt fedora, Badu appears completely at home. In fact, her primary residence is in her native Dallas, where the 44-year-old singer lives with Seven and her two daughters, 11-year-old Puma (whose father is gangsta-rap pioneer The D.O.C.) and six-year-old Mars (whose father is mystical-minded Jay Z protégé Jay Electronica). This place, she explains, is where she comes when she needs to unplug. "I don't go outside at all when I'm here," she says between bites of kale salad. "I stay in with the shades down; I don't want to know what time it is. I just want to be naked and create."



RAD HATTER
Badu performing
in Philadelphia,
August 2015

By any measure, Badu is in the middle of a creative hot streak right now. The night before we meet, she played a sold-out show at Brooklyn's opulent Kings Theatre to celebrate the Thanksgiving-weekend release of *But You Caint Use My Phone*, her delightfully clever new 11-track mixtape themed around love in the smart-phone age. The day before the show, she was back in Dallas, assisting in a woman's home birth as part of her second life as a certified doula. "I didn't sleep at all," she says happily.

In addition to touring eight months out of the year, Badu is constantly making music; she estimates she has hundreds of unreleased songs, many of them recorded

since her last proper studio LP in 2010. But lately, she says, she's found it challenging to assemble an album that she's comfortable sharing with the world. "You start to think that you're not creative anymore. But you can't force it. It's like a baby: Only when it's fully developed can it come."

But You Caint Use My Phone was her way of sidestepping that block. It started when she was driving Seven to school in Dallas one morning, listening to new music on SoundCloud. "The music that's in fashion isn't necessarily what's appealing to me," she says. "As much as I admire the voice of my son's generation, I don't embody it." But something about Drake's "Hotline Bling" connected with her, and

she decided to cover it with help from a 23-year-old local producer named Zach Witness, stretching the song out to a spacey seven minutes. Within days, she had posted the song online with a brief, tantalizing message for her patient fans, promising an upcoming mixtape called *But You Caint Use My Phone*.

No such mixtape existed at that point, nor was there any clear plan for one. “But I knew it was going to be ill,” Badu says with a knowing smile. “We had this frequency vibrating around us.” Writing things down to conjure them into existence is a practice she’s kept ever since penciling the thought “I am an artist, I will do good in the world” onto a pink sheet of paper as a 10-year-old in Dallas. “Spelling is a spell,” she says. “Everything we write down happens.”

The name of the then-imaginary mixtape came from a lyric in 1997’s “Tyrone,” her signature fed-up anthem, which Badu remembers as an early lesson in the power of serendipity. “I freestyled that song,” she says with a laugh. “We were just joking around. I wrote all these other songs that took so much time and effort, thinking, ‘John Lennon will be proud of this one.’ And then here’s ‘Tyrone,’ this private joke between me and God – and that’s the one I’m known for.”

Badu’s version of “Hotline Bling” quickly racked up plays on SoundCloud and YouTube. All that was left was actually making the mixtape, which she did in roughly 11 days, recording funk-up covers and originals at her home studio and at Witness’ parents’ place. “We were scrambling to make sure we kept our word,” she says. “We had to be kind of quiet, because Zach’s mom didn’t want us to make too much noise.” She recorded some of her vocals directly into the Voice Memos app on her iPhone, a departure from her usual methods, which involve yards of two-inch tape. “I always considered myself an analog girl,” she says, “but I’m moving and floating and swimming so well in this digital world.”

Drake is a good friend of Badu’s – he memorably rapped about dropping by her house in Dallas for tea and romantic advice on 2014’s “Days in the East” – but he does not appear on *But You Caint Use My Phone*. Instead, she recruited an unknown Atlanta rapper named Aubrey Davis, whose flow closely resembles Drake with a nasty head cold, to rap on two songs. Many listeners were tricked into confusing the two MCs. “Drake thought it was funny,” Badu says. “He texted me: ‘You’d better stop letting these young cats come over and take up my tea time!’”

One of the last songs to come together was “Hello,” a tender duet with her ex André 3000 – their first on-record collaboration since Outkast’s 2000 album cut “Humble Mumble,” which was released shortly after the end of their romantic involvement. The two artists’ long-past relationship has taken on mythic qualities for many fans; hearing their voices in harmony again feels right in the way it might have if Joni Mitchell and Graham Nash had made a new love song 20 years after “Our House.” Badu says the musical re-



Badu with her son, Seven

“I could start a cult if I wanted to,” Badu says. “But I’d rather remind people that they are who they are, and their thoughts are their thoughts.”

union was only natural now that André lives in Dallas, where he moved some time ago to be closer to their son and her. “We’re together all the time, at least three days a week,” she says. “I’m a really big fan of his. I’m always anxious to impress him.” André began by laying down a characteristically adept rap verse about sex and commitment (“Don’t need shit on the side no more, all entree, fuck a salad”), before suggesting a couple of weeks later that he and Badu try singing the Isley Brothers’ version of Todd Rundgren’s “Hello It’s Me” together. “We were in my living room, and André was like, ‘Are we going to finish this?’” she says. “We stayed up until five in the morning.”

Badu remains similarly close with the exes who fathered her other two kids. “If it’s real, it’s real,” she says. “And those friendships are very real. They were all mini-marriages of sorts – the only difference is I didn’t go to Vegas to get married.” She says

she still dreams of settling down for good with someone, someday: “I’d love to. That would be my next project. The goal is always forever, isn’t it?”

In other ways, she’s a deeply rooted non-conformist. Like many hip-hop and R&B artists who came of age in the Eighties and Nineties, Badu is fond of the teachings of Clarence 13X, the late leader of the esoteric Nation of Islam offshoot known as the Five-Percent Nation. “Eighty-five percent of the people are deaf, dumb and blind,” she says, reciting the group’s foundational theory of society. “Ten percent of the people profit off their ignorance, and five percent of the people are watching from an observation deck.”

At her show in Brooklyn the previous night, she shared some wisdom of her own from the stage – “Freedom is coming, for the slaves and the slave masters... evolution happens with or without your permission” – and asked the audience to hold their hands up, palms facing outward, for a moment of communal energy. “Could you feel it? Isn’t it awesome?” she asks me. “I could start a cult if I wanted to. But I’d rather remind people that they are who they are, and their thoughts are their thoughts.”

Outside of music, Badu answers her spiritual calling through her work as a doula assisting pregnant friends and acquaintances – she says she’s helped with around 20 births since 2001, and she’s working toward becoming a fully certified midwife. She also volunteers at hospices to help comfort terminal patients. “I’ll bring tuning forks and singing bowls and play piano and sing, or sit there and talk to them,” she says. “And I like to play comedy records, because that calms too – Richard Pryor, *The Carol Burnett Show*, Road Runner and Coyote, Dick Gregory.”

She’s somehow found time to work on yet another longtime dream as well: Badu recently staged an eccentric, largely improvised one-woman show called “Live Nudity” in Dallas, and she hopes to bring it on the road soon. “I should have done that a long time ago,” she says. “It came so easy.”

Badu looks around her at the art-filled room and thinks back to when she first moved in, shortly after arriving in New York during the Blizzard of 1996 in search of a record deal. “It doesn’t seem like 20 years,” she says. “I can’t believe I remember everything. I thought I probably smoked it all away!”

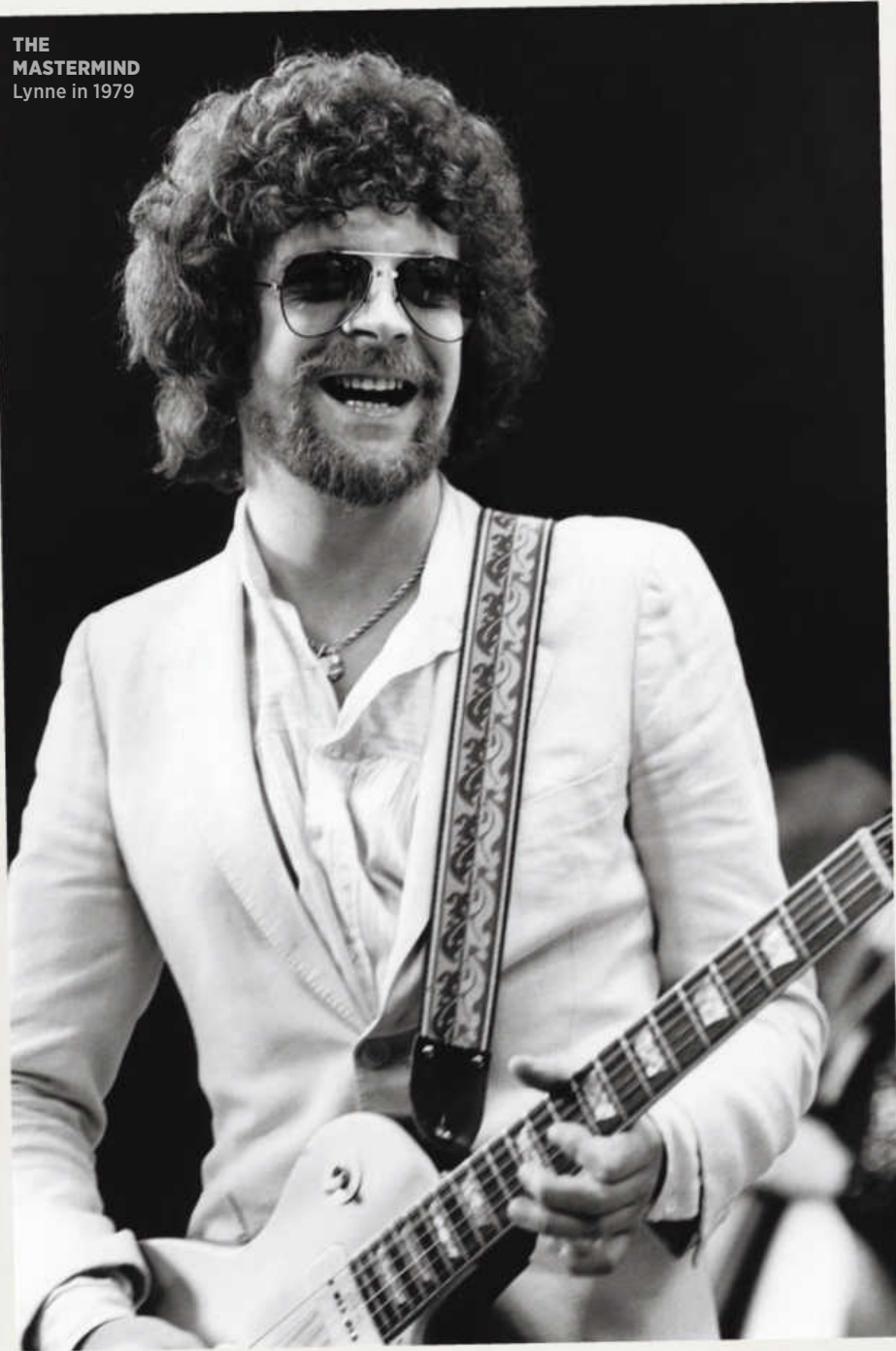
Before I leave, I ask Badu if she feels like she’s ready to end her now-six-year break between proper studio albums. “Oh, yeah,” she says, right away. “This is just an intermission. I feel reborn.”

Jeff Lynne

The ELO leader on 'Mr. Blue Sky,' producing the Beatles, and why he'd rather have just stayed in the studio

BY ANDY GREENE

THE
MASTERMIND
Lynne in 1979



EVEN WHEN ELECTRIC Light Orchestra were selling millions of albums in the 1970s, only devoted fans knew frontman Jeff Lynne's name – which was just fine by him. “I didn’t push myself forward,” Lynne says. “It just wasn’t in my nature. All I wanted was studio time, more studio time and even more studio time.”

After ELO split up in the mid-Eighties, Lynne produced comeback albums for George Harrison, Tom Petty and Roy Orbison – then pulled all three together, along with Bob Dylan, to form the Traveling Wilburys. “It was marvelous,” says Lynne. “I thought, ‘I should have been doing this years ago.’” In 2014, Lynne revived ELO for a show at London’s Hyde Park before 50,000 fans. The gig went so well he decided to cut a new ELO album, *Alone in the Universe*, and this year ELO will launch a world tour. “It took a lot of rehearsal, since we hadn’t played in 28 years,” he says. “I had to wait that long before I could really enjoy it again.”

Showdown 1973

In the late 1960s, I was in a group called the Idle Race, and I got to be pals with this guy called Roy Wood, who was in the Move. We thought it might be nice to have a band with strings in it – back then most groups only had drums and guitar, organ and maybe saxophones and trumpets. The problem with strings, as we discovered, was that there were no pickups on them, which meant doing shows was a real pain in the ass.

After about three months, Roy left to do his own group. I carried on and became the sole producer and the sole writer. I wrote “Showdown” in my mom and dad’s front room in Birmingham, England. I knew it was going to

be a hit after just a few notes. The lyrics ("She blew in on a southern wind/Now my heart is turned to stone again") are just a made-up scenario. A lot of people ask me what my songs mean, and I have no idea.

Evil Woman 1975

Face the Music [ELO's 1975 album] was finished, but I thought, "There's not a good single." So I sent the band out to [watch] a game of football and made up "Evil Woman" on the spot. It was kind of a posh one for me, with all the big piano solos and the string arrangement. It was inspired by a certain woman, but I can't say who. She's appeared a few times in my songs.

Mr. Blue Sky 1977

I suppose this is my most well-known song. Even kids love it, since it's like a nursery rhyme. I wrote the words at a chalet in the mountains of Switzerland. It was misty and cloudy, and I didn't see any countryside for four days. Then everything cleared. There was this enormous view, and the sky was blue.

By this point, ELO was playing stadiums. It was fun, but kind of scary. I was reluctant to become a real rock star. I was shy and was always told to not get a big head. I did have a big house, but I didn't do rock-star things.

Don't Bring Me Down 1979

This one I made up in the studio. When I was singing, there was a gap in the vocals, so I just shouted out, "Groose!" It just came into my head. The engineer said that it meant "greetings" in German, which I thought was lovely, so we left it in. When we played it live, everyone would sing "Bruce." I just ended up singing "Bruce" as well.

This was the first song I ever did without strings. After six albums, I was fed up with them. Part of it was trouble with the unions. The string players would have to stop before a song was finished if the end of the hour was approaching. Now that there are samplers, string players aren't so rude.

When We Was Fab (George Harrison) 1987

I decided to pack it in with ELO in 1986. The concerts were horrible, and I always wanted to be a producer anyway. About six months later, George Harrison asked me to work on his next album. Soon after we met, he said, "Let's go on holiday. I'm going to Australia." He took me to the Grand Prix in Adelaide, which was amazing.

George came up with the words for "When We Was Fab," which we co-wrote.

It was supposed to sound like a Beatles song, which was magical for me, since I was a huge Beatles fan.

Let It Shine (Brian Wilson) 1988

After George's album, Warner Bros. asked me to produce Brian Wilson. I was like, "You can't produce Brian Wilson. He's the best producer in the world." But I agreed anyway. We wrote "Let It Shine" at his house in Malibu. He was being treated really badly at the time. I only saw Dr. Landy [Eugene Landy, Wilson's controversial therapist-manager] a couple of times, walking around with his cape and walking stick. You could see what a nice guy Brian was, despite everything happening in the background.



MEET THE WILBURYS

The Traveling Wilburys in 1988: Dylan, Lynne, Petty, Harrison and Orbison

Free Fallin' (Tom Petty) 1989

One day, I saw Tom stopped at a streetlight in Los Angeles. I had met him once before, and he said, "Jeff, pull over." When I did, he said, "I just listened to George's album. What about coming over and writing some tunes together?" "Free Fallin'" was probably the second song we wrote. I got the chords, and we both fleshed out the chorus. Everyone who heard it knew it was a hit.

It was Tom's first solo album, *Full Moon Fever*, and I didn't realize it would be such a big thing for the Heartbreakers, Tom going off on his own. Mike [Campbell] was there, but I played keyboards and bass and told the drummer what to play. The thing is, Tom got a great record out of it. It's still my favorite record that I made with anybody. It's so simple and fresh, and it's got no bullshit.

Nobody's Child (The Traveling Wilburys) 1990

One night, George Harrison and I were recording and he said, "We should form a

group." I said, "OK. Who should we have in it?" He said, "Bob Dylan." I'm going, "Bloody hell." I never expected that answer. And then I said, "Can we have Roy Orbison?" He said, "Great, I love Roy." And we both loved Tom. Everyone we asked joined immediately.

George had some wacky ideas about how the Wilburys could tour. His first was that we'd rent an aircraft carrier and then fly to different ports and let everyone climb onto the aircraft carrier and have a listen. His next idea was to tour by train. We'd pull into a station, drop a stage and play. But we never got around to either of them. Everyone had their own tours to do.

"Nobody's Child" was a charity single to raise money for orphans – it's an old American folk song with a real nice sentiment to it. Later on, we did a second album after Roy died, but I could have done without it. Roy was just too big a part of the group.

Free as a Bird (The Beatles) 1995

George asked me to do this [a "new" Beatles track built around an old John Lennon demo]. It was the hardest thing I've had to do in my life. There was this elation and dread at the same time. I was given a mono one-track tape of John singing the song in 1977.

I came to the first session with George, and we were late, which was a bad start. Ringo and Paul were already there. All four of us sat down at a table, I think the first time they'd all been together for about 20 years. They spent a long time talking about the old days, just reminiscing. I was thrilled to bits.

Some days I thought I was going to get it right, and other days I thought, "What did I get myself into?" One day, I waited until everyone went home, then used a little sampler to insert John's voice into the song wherever I could. It would have been much easier if I had ProTools! The next morning Paul came in and was like, "Jeff, you did it! Well done." He gave me a big hug. It was a relief.

When I Was a Boy 2015

This is the most autobiographical song I've ever written. It's about listening to my little crystal-set radio growing up. It's the first single off the new ELO album, which is doing well in England. We just played *Jimmy Fallon*. I used to dread doing TV appearances, but with monitors now, I can actually hear myself. It's taken me about 40 years to get here, but I've finally caught on.

LAST YEAR WAS A ROUGH one for Rick Ross, who spent most of the summer and fall of 2015 under house arrest at his Atlanta mansion due to a pending case involving the alleged assault and kidnapping of a former groundskeeper. "I had a few stumbles, most definitely," the rap superstar tells *ROLLING STONE*. "Fortunately, it wasn't the worst home to be confined in, you dig? But it wasn't a vacation." To avoid going stir-crazy, he spent much of that time writing songs for his eighth studio album, *Black Market*, which is full of rich production, multilayered boasts and, at times, a more reflective tone than usual. "I love the uptempo club music that's going on right now, but I wanted to step away from that sound," he says. "I made this album a little more soulful and sophisticated by adding live guitars and shit like that."

One of the best songs on this album is called "Crocodile Python." What does that even mean?

I recorded that on my first night back in the studio. When the beat came on, I rubbed my fingers together and imagined the texture: "Crocodile python, that's what this material is." I thought that was a dope-ass title. There's a song where you say you'll "assassinate Trump like I'm Zimmerman." What made you say that?

I would never advocate violence on Trump or anyone. It's lyrical assassination. That's me being a poet, putting words together, with no violence in my heart at all. Matter of fact, my cameraman was Trump's caddy at his golf course for five years, and he says Trump is cool as fuck.

You remixed Adele's "Hello." Are you a big fan of hers?

I love Adele. When I see her, I may kiss Adele. She speaks for so many people. When I hear her voice, I stop and make that face and say, "What the fuck, man?" I just gaze off into the sky for a second and think creatively. I've got a beat ready for her if I ever run across her.

You've lost a lot of weight in the past few years. How do you keep it off?

I've lost maybe 70 or 75 pounds. I do my "RossFit" – that's CrossFit mixed with a blunt or two. I still eat my Wingstop, but I got rid of a lot of the soda and the rice and all that nonsense.

Do you ever miss being "the biggest boss," in terms of your physical size?

No, man [*laughs*]. I've still got my boss belly. I'll always have that.

Q&A



Rick Ross

On his house arrest, loving *Star Wars* and Adele, and his secret for staying in shape (hint: it involves weed)

BY SIMON VOZICK-LEVINSON

You're friends with Cam Newton from the Carolina Panthers. Do you think you could make it in the NFL now that you're in better shape?

I think I could. I'm the J.J. Watt of the rap game. Would I suggest you bet on me to win in the NFL? Of course not. But would I show up and kill some motherfuckers out there? Without a doubt.

You've got Darth Vader's mask tattooed on your body. Safe to say you're a big *Star Wars* fan?

Of course! I got an eight-inch Darth Vader on my left side, man! And my favorite car out of my entire collection is a '57 Chevy that I named Vader. **How come he's your favorite?**

That's the big homey! My father watched all the *Star Trek* and *Star Wars* that you could imagine, along with the martial arts. So I was into all that as a youngster, and I always rooted for the bad guy.

Meek Mill is signed to your label, and you've made a few songs with Drake. How did you feel when those two guys started going after each other on record last year?

You know, I didn't like it, but I've seen worse. I'm glad they kept it relatively smooth. As a fan, I always enjoyed beef – not the loss of B.I.G. and Tupac, but the competition.

Your friend DJ Khaled recently got lost at sea on a jet ski after he dropped by your place in Miami. He documented the whole thing on Snapchat, and it was pretty dramatic. Were you worried about his safety?

I can't fucking believe that guy. I live on an island, and it's difficult to find. So I'm sitting there with three or four girls, waiting for my food, and I hear one of the chicks say, "You've got company." I'm like, "What the fuck?" Because my home is gated and shit. So I look up, and I see DJ Khaled waving his arms! I walked out there in disbelief, and I invited him in and had my chef make him some food. I said, "I know you're hungry, come on." By the time he left, it was dark. Then he got lost out there for, like, three hours! I told him, "Man, you're fucking crazy." **What do you think hip-hop fans should do about the secret Wu-Tang Clan album whose sole copy was sold to disgraced pharmaceutical exec Martin Shkreli for \$2 million?**

I want that fucking album! I'm a Wu-Tang fan. If I gotta buy it back from RZA and bootleg it for the people, I'll do it – just for me and the real Wu-Tang fans that still put "Wu-Tang Clan Ain't Nothing ta Fuck Wit" in rotation when they want to pop shit. 🎧

Single-Speaker Stereos

Ready to get serious about your wireless setup? These powerful Bluetooth streamers can replace almost any home system

BY GREG EMMANUEL



Bowers & Wilkins Zeppelin Wireless \$699 bowers-wilkins.com

You'll never hide this speaker behind houseplants. The 26-inch Zeppelin Wireless has an oblong physique that looks like a piece of art, and a sound that measures up to the eye candy. A 150mm subwoofer helps create a powerful, clear bass at any volume, and the midrange speakers spread the sound wide, creating two-speaker-like stereo separation. Bluetooth, AirPlay and Spotify Connect compatibility means you can stream it all.



Peachtree Audio deepblue2

\$399 peachtreeaudio.com

One of the best midlevel Bluetooth speakers money can buy, the deepblue2 has five built-in drivers that produce an incredible range of tones. That means Adele's voice remains crystal clear, but so do the rapid-fire beats on Missy Elliott's "WTF." Sure, it won't win any beauty contests – but audio love is blind.



Marshall Woburn

\$549 marshallheadphones.com

Fans of the classic Woburn stack amp can rest assured – this wireless adaptation has the same loud crunch while also looking the part with a black vinyl cabinet and analog dials. But if your tastes run more Rachmaninoff than Rush, you may want to look for a speaker with a better defined range.



Wren V5US

\$399 wrensound.com

The compact V5US isn't loud enough to fill a loft party, but this sleek speaker provides more than enough sound to rock a medium-size room. In addition to Bluetooth and AirPlay, the V5US is compatible with DTS Play-Fi, a new technology that allows you to add it to a multi-speaker system if you do acquire a little more space.

All About That Bass

Three new accessories to bring more low end into your life

Audeze EL-8 Titanium

\$800

These high-tech cans pack ultra-realistic bass – and are the first pair to bypass the iPhone's headphone jack for a higher-fi Lightning cable connection.



SubPac S2

\$379

Want to really feel the music? Strap this device to the back of your chair and every bass note will literally move you. It's a visceral new way to listen to tunes.



BoomStick

\$99

This device noticeably improves the sound on any set of headphones – even those feeble buds that come with an iPhone. Just plug them into it (and then into your phone) and enjoy a better quality of music, especially when it comes to bass.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: BOWERS & WILKINS; AUDEZE; SUBPAC; BOOMCLOUD 360; WREN SOUND SYSTEMS; PEACHTREE AUDIO; MARSHALL HEADPHONES



HOW THE JUICE
GOT LOOSE
Gooding with Vance

The Great American Crime Story

Ryan Murphy's 'The People v. O.J. Simpson' brilliantly dramatizes an American obsession

BY ROB SHEFFIELD

THE MOMENT WHERE "THE PEOPLE v. O.J. Simpson" takes off into true brilliance: O.J.'s lawyers get a little bad news. It's June 17th, 1994, the day O.J. flew the coop for a wild Bronco ride that all of America will watch on live TV. John Travolta, as Hollywood attorney Robert Shapiro, gets handed a letter by colleague Robert Kardashian, played by David

THE PEOPLE V. O.J. SIMPSON
BEGINNING FEBRUARY 2ND, FX

Schwimmer. Not only has the Juice escaped with a gun, he's not planning to come back alive. He left a note signed "peace and love," scrawling his name with a smiley face. Travolta reads it with a look of true horror, muttering, "Jesus Christ, who the hell signs a suicide note with a happy face?"

Let's face it, if the O.J. Simpson case didn't exist, Ryan Murphy would have had to invent it. It's the only murder tale that could live up to his outsize taste for lurid all-American pulp. The ever-prolific TV auteur kicks off his *American Crime Story* franchise with a superb 10-episode version of the most notorious of celeb homicides, the 1994 bloodbath so perfectly designed for Hollywood that the trial practically invent-

ed reality TV. What looked like an open-and-shut case turned into a legal mess, tapping into the nation's ugliest obsessions: race, sex, money, fame. *The People v. O.J. Simpson* pulls out all the stops with an all-star cast, turning it into a fascinatingly suspenseful saga, even though the murder itself is no mystery.

Travolta is excellent as Shapiro. Billy Magnussen is hilariously dazed and confused as O.J.'s flunkie Kato Kaelin. But Courtney B. Vance's Johnnie Cochran steals the show as the celebrity lawyer who sees this case as his biggest score. The first time we see Cochran, he's picking out his wardrobe. "I gotta run out to Neverland," he tells his wife. "MJ's got some new pile of commotions, so I can't wear lime - Michael's afraid of that color."

The only weak link is Cuba Gooding Jr., who's pretty terrible - he turns O.J. into a hoarse hysteric, shrieking things like, "Juice ain't got nothing to hide!" But here he's a minor player surrounded by a swarm of larger-than-life Hollywood hustlers - Selma Blair is perfection as Nicole Brown Simpson's BFF, Kris Kardashian Jenner, rocking her cleavage at the funeral while yelling at Khloé and Kourtney to put down the candy and behave. Of all only-in-L.A. stories, this is the most only-in-L.A. of them all.

Showtime's Sleazy Wall Street Brawl

Giamatti and Lewis make 'Billions' crackle

Paul Giamatti is a crusading U.S. attorney with a perfect record taking down white-collar criminals on Wall Street: He has won 81 cases, and never lost. Until he takes on hedge-fund flim-flam man Bobby "Axe" Axelrod, played

BILLIONS SUNDAYS,
10 P.M., SHOWTIME

by *Homeland*'s Damian Lewis, who's exactly the kind of blowhard asshole you'd expect from a guy who calls himself Axe. He's happy to play cat-and-mouse with Giamatti, when he's not flying his personal jet to go party with Metallica. The fun of *Billions* is the way Giamatti's only slightly less sleazy than his prey, though a lot less rich.



Lewis and Giamatti rumble.

"A good matador doesn't kill a fresh bull," he rants. "You wait until he's been stuck a few times." Even better, there's Maggie Siff, beloved by *Mad Men* and *Sons of Anarchy* fans, as Axe Capital's resident shrink - who also happens to be Giamatti's wife - and sees right through both their games. In true Showtime fashion, *Billions* doesn't aim for the moral or political heft of *The Big Short* - the whole point is to throw Giamatti and Lewis together and let them battle it out. **R.S.**

Reopening the 'X-Files'

Chris Carter was one of TV's brightest minds – then he left it all behind. Now he's finally resurrecting his greatest show

BY NEIL STRAUSS

THE FIRST THING VISITORS NOTICE upon entering the sun-drenched four-story Santa Monica office of *X-Files* creator Chris Carter is the artwork on the walls. Massive, imposing canvases and decorated surfboards loom overhead, each emblazoned with a unique phrase: BULLSHIT AIN'T FERTILIZER. ROTTEN ON THE INSIDE. GOD'S GIFT TO WOMEN.

Ask Carter what those phrases mean, and he will tell you that they are about bad experiences he's had – with sociopathic people, with the destructive force of nature, with 40 acres of farmland he bought. And so this golden temple of creativity is secretly a shrine to the dark side. This is the world of Chris Carter.

"I guess I'm looking for relevance again," he explains when asked why he chose to immortalize bad memories as his art and office decor.

Relevance? It's an oddly appropriate word to use for someone who hasn't had a new series on television in nearly 14 years. This month, however, Carter is finally returning to Fox with a six-episode reprise of *The X-Files*. "It's about looking for a personal relevance, a foggy window into me," he elaborates.

At the height of his productivity in the late Nineties, he was running two network TV shows – *The X-Files* and *Millennium* – in addition to writing an *X-Files* movie. Not long before the series' final episode, Carter decided that he needed a break.

"After 9/11, everything changed overnight," he recalls, sitting at the large rectangular table in his office where he normally writes. A weathered, rubber-band-encircled Tiffany box rests atop, stuffed with thank-you notes he's writing to the people who worked on the new episodes. A Murphy bed is pushed into the wall across from him, with two corkboards for storyboarding affixed to its bottom.

"All of a sudden, talk of government conspiracies wasn't so interesting anymore," Carter continues. "People were looking to the government to help them. And they were too scared of real-world



X-FACTOR
Gillian Anderson and
David Duchovny
in 2015



Carter

things to be scared by a television show. It felt like a huge downbeat in the country and... reality TV started taking all the best time slots. So it seemed like a good time to bow out gracefully."

When the series ended, Carter, as he puts it, "dropped out" of the TV business for 10 years. "I needed to get out of small dark rooms looking at small screens," he says, blinking through piercing pale-blue eyes. "I just needed to live my life." So he parted ways with an industry he compares to a train: "When you hop off of it, it just takes off without you."

A row of framed pictures on a shelf in Carter's office documents the result of this sabbatical. One shows him in a single-engine plane on his first solo flight; in another, he's surfing a monster wave; in the adjacent frame, he's heli-skiing; then he's climbing a mountain. Carter, who began his career as an editor at *Surfing* magazine, didn't really rest, it seems. He just found intensity outdoors instead of indoors.

To fill his remaining time, Carter accepted a fellowship at the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics at University of California-Santa Barbara.

When he noticed that television was having a renaissance in the form of shorter-run shows on cable with far fewer restrictions on language and imagery – many of them created by former members of his writing room, such as *Breaking Bad*'s Vince Gilligan – his enthusiasm for TV rekindled.

Though Carter doesn't admit this, his return to Hollywood (not counting a second *X-Files* film he wrote in 2007) must have been disappointing for the man who ruled the medium a decade earlier. A series about the Salem witch trials that he created for Showtime never made it to air. Same with an Area 51 drama he worked on for AMC. And ditto for a conspiracy thriller, *Unique*, which he developed at Fox.

But the toughest hit was his 2014 Amazon pilot, *The After*, a Sartre-meets-Dante serial drama set in the intersection of Los Angeles and Hades. Carter spent a year

writing eight episodes in what was envisioned as a 99-show arc. But when the executive spearheading the project was replaced, and Carter refused to create a “show bible” explaining the series for his new boss because he prefers a more spontaneous writing process, Amazon canceled its order for the series.

“I was excited to explore hell,” Carter says. “I believe we’re all in a kind of hell.”

And so, 14 years after *The X-Files* ended its run, Carter is finally back on TV in a familiar guise: bringing the show, and some of its presumed-dead characters, back to life. “I hadn’t quite imagined that we would have a second run,” Carter says of his paranormal baby, which he describes alternately as a monster, a hydra and a Frankenstein. “It’s amazing to me. There’s a little bit of ‘been there, done that,’ but it’s got a whole new context, both politically and scientifically.”

The current arc, which comes too late for the 2012 alien invasion prophesied at the end of the series’ first run, centers on a conspiracy-theory Internet show reminiscent of Alex Jones’ popular *Infowars*. To gather material, Carter attended a number of conventions, including the Secret Space Program, where speakers discussed various theories about how the world’s elite are weaponizing space, using alien technology, planning an overhaul of the economic system and, in general, plotting a new world order. The final episode explores Carter’s interest in CRISPR – a relatively cheap and fast technique of altering genes.

“The show is kind of a search for God, because I believe science is a search for God,” says Carter, who was raised Baptist in Bellflower, California, as part of the Christian Reformed Church. “During my fellowship, I worked under a Nobel physicist. He didn’t believe in God. For me, it’s mind-boggling that a person who deals with things that are so incredible, so beautiful that you have to believe that they were actually created by some greater power, doesn’t believe in it at all.

“My wife doesn’t believe in God either,” Carter continues. “I just have a sense that there’s something greater out there, and I think that has fueled the stories that we tell. That poster that says, ‘I want to believe’ – he gestures to the classic *X-Files* artwork on the wall – “that’s me. That’s me! I want to believe. I want that paranormal experience. Aliens, they owe me a visit. I’ve been their best PR man for the past nearly 25 years.”

Close encounters notwithstanding, if the miniseries goes well, does Carter plan on keeping *The X-Files* open for further seasons?

“I think I’m going to answer for my wife,” he replies, very seriously. “No.”

Revival of the Fittest

In the era of reboots and remakes, your favorite TV shows are never truly dead. Here are five more series getting a second life



Sherilyn Fenn and MacLachlan, circa 1990

Twin Peaks

Last Aired: 1991

Current Status: In production

What We Know: Twenty-five years after it became the freshest, weirdest thing on TV, David Lynch’s noirish crime series is returning for a run on Showtime. Lynch is directing every episode, and several characters – including FBI agent Dale Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan) – are back. Sadly, the actress who played Log Lady died last year.



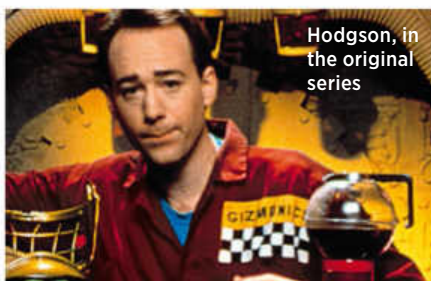
William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy, 1966

Star Trek

Last Aired: 2005 (*Star Trek: Enterprise*)

Current Status: Set to air in early 2017

What We Know: In the tradition of next-gen *Star Trek* series like *Deep Space Nine*, this one will feature new characters exploring new worlds. Boldly airing where no series has aired before (it will be the first new show for CBS’s streaming network), it’s exec-produced by Alex Kurtzman, who co-wrote the two recent *Star Trek* films.



Hodgson, in the original series

Mystery Science Theater 3000

Last Aired: 1999

Current Status: In production

What We Know: A cult comedy about a janitor forced to watch terrible movies, *MST3K* roared back to life thanks to a record-breaking Kickstarter campaign that raised nearly \$6 million. Creator Joel Hodgson will oversee the episodes, which will feature a new cast – including comedians Patton Oswalt and Jonah Ray.



Lawless, 1996

Xena Warrior Princess

Last Aired: 2001

Current Status: In development

What We Know: Who’s the new Xena? That’s what fans of the battle-scarred Greek heroine are wondering. The series plans to focus on younger warriors, meaning Lucy Lawless won’t return to the title role. “This will be a true reboot, but not one as radical as some of the fans fear,” says writer Javier Grillo-Marxuach.



Dave Coulier, Bob Sagat, Mary-Kate Olsen and John Stamos, circa 1989

Full House

Last Aired: 1995

Current Status: Premieres in February

What We Know: The original cast (minus the Olsen twins) will be back for *Fuller House*. The sitcom still involves a widowed parent, only this time it’s now-grown-up D.J. (Candace Cameron Bure). “It has a very familiar vibe,” says creator Jeff Franklin, “although it is very much a show that feels set in today’s world.”

NOEL MURRAY

RandomNotes



2016: Officially Truckin'

Bob Weir, Mickey Hart, Bill Kreutzmann and John Mayer continued the Grateful Dead's tradition of New Year's Eve blowouts with an epic Dead & Co. show at Los Angeles' Forum. One highlight: NBA legend Bill Walton (left, with Mayer) reprised a Bill Graham stunt from the Seventies by dressing up as Father Time. Dead & Co. have no 2016 dates officially booked, but Mayer dropped a hint: "At the risk of rocking any boats, we'll see you next year!"



NEW RIDERS OF THE PURPLE BUD
Jerry's daughter, Trixie Garcia and Dead friend Bernie Cahill did a lap around the Forum in a massive joint.

OUT OF THE WOODS

Taylor Swift went hiking in L.A. after wrapping the 1989 tour. For the first time in years, she has no concrete career plans: "I think people might need a break from me," she's said. "[I'll] hang out with friends. Write new music. Maybe not write new music. I don't know."



Nothing Else Matters: Hetfield on Holiday

What was one of James Hetfield's 2015 highlights? "Justin Bieber wearing a Metallica shirt!" The Metallica frontman took a break from sessions for the follow-up to 2008's *Death Magnetic* (the band has written close to 20 songs) to spend the holidays in Uruguay, making sandcastles with his family.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC; VH/CPR/FAMELYNET PICTURES; SPLASH NEWS; 2. JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC



WHEN PRINCE FLIES
Prince arrived via helicopter in St. Barts, where he played Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich's private New Year's party.



Kings Ring Nashville's Bell

Chris Stapleton (center) jumped onstage with the Kings of Leon at the band's huge free Nashville New Year's show. "You guys love him and we love him," Caleb Followill said of Stapleton. The Kings start recording in February: "Most people take five years to make [their seventh LP]," Followill has joked. "So we're still in the early stages of our plan."



CHRISSIE'S COMBAT ROCK
Chrissie Hynde fronted an impromptu supergroup that included Noel Gallagher (left), Damon Albarn and Clash bassist Paul Simonon at Simonon's 60th birthday party. The band played classics like "Brand New Cadillac" and Toots and the Maytals' "Pressure Drop."



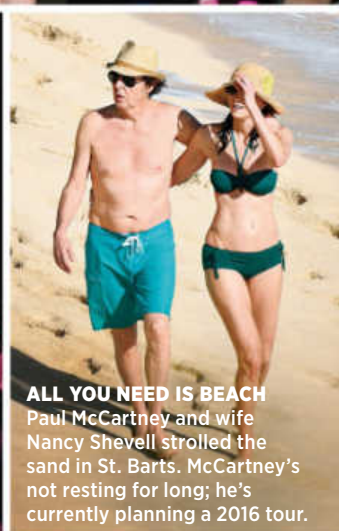
BEST CHRISTMAS EVER! In what's become a Christmas Eve tradition, Bono hit Dublin's Grafton Street to busk for the homeless. Glen Hansard and Hozier joined him for stripped-down versions of "Every Breaking Wave" and "When Love Comes to Town."



TEXAS TRIO Willie Nelson welcomed 2016 at Austin's Moody Theater (located on the city's Willie Nelson Blvd.), joined by friends Billy Gibbons and Kacey Musgraves. "Willie said, 'Let's do two,'" Gibbons says. "I said, 'Let's make it a double,' so I joined him for a round of four songs. It made good end-of-year sense."

TIME OF THEIR LIVES

Green Day have been laying low lately, but Billie Joe Armstrong popped up at his pal Jesse Malin's New Year's bash at New York's Berlin club. A band including Armstrong and Steven Van Zandt (below, with Armstrong) ripped through covers of the Replacements, the Ramones and Cheap Trick.



ALL YOU NEED IS BEACH
Paul McCartney and wife Nancy Shevell strolled the sand in St. Barts. McCartney's not resting for long; he's currently planning a 2016 tour.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: PRES/AKM-GSI; MICHAEL WEINTROB/SHOW COBRA; WENN.COM; STEPHANE LENHOF/CRYSTAL/PACIFICCOASTNEWS; DOLLY FAIBYSHEV; GARY MILLER/GETTY IMAGES; REX SHUTTERSTOCK

WILL PARIS SAVE THE WORLD?

The climate talks in France changed everything – but they nearly fell apart. An inside look at the negotiations shows just how hard it was to make a deal. And in the wake of the accord, where do we go from here?

★ By Jeff Goodell ★

IT WILL PROBABLY BE 10 YEARS before anyone can say whether the Paris climate deal, which was agreed to with much hoopla on December 12th, was a historic event that marked the moment when the human race finally got serious about the fight against climate change, or just a United Nations therapy session whose main role was to make us feel better about our headlong plunge toward climate catastrophe.

My bet is that it's a mix of both. The importance of the agreement is hard to overstate. For the first time in history, virtually every nation in the world made voluntary commitments to cut carbon pollution and help vulnerable countries deal with the impacts of climate change. There are plenty of devils in the details, but the larger message was unambiguous: After decades of arguing, fighting and betrayal, the people of the world stood together and said goodbye to fossil fuels. The conference was so full of good feeling that it almost felt like a Coke commercial. Secretary of State John Kerry, who worked as hard on this deal as anyone, believes it will unleash a wave of clean-energy innovation: "If 150 nations are taking it seriously and setting targets, even if they don't make them, that will generate massive investment and a huge amount of private-sector activity," he told me before the conference began. "And then you have to hope that somebody comes up with clean-energy technology, which makes it competitive with fossil fuel, and then, boom, you get your low-carbon economy."

But there are plenty of reasons to be skeptical. For one thing, important aspects of the agreement – including carbon-pollution reductions and promises from

rich nations to help poor nations pay for clean-energy technology and climate adaptation measures – are not legally binding. For another, the \$100 billion a year that rich nations have committed to help poorer nations is still not enough. Finally, the emissions reductions in the agreement don't add up to much. The explicit goal of the agreement is to keep warming below 2 degrees Celsius (3.7 F), which is the widely agreed-upon threshold for dangerous climate change. But as it stands today, even if all 195 nations make good on their existing commitments (a pipe dream), the planet will still warm by nearly 3 C by the end of the century, which could be enough to drown Miami and turn the American Southwest into the Sahel. The agreement does include an aspirational goal of holding warming to 1.5 C, which would basically require every nation of the world to quit burning fossil fuels by the middle of the century, if not sooner. As one observer in Paris quipped to me, "They may as well agree that all fairies shall ride unicorns too."

However it turns out, Paris was a remarkable moment in the long war against climate change. For nearly 25 years, the U.N. climate negotiations, which began in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, have been a forum for nations to vent, posture, point fingers – and, ultimately, not do much of anything. In 2009, the meeting in Copenhagen was a festival of disorganization and betrayal, ending with an 11th-hour closed-door confrontation between rich and poor nations that only deepened the cynicism among many that the world would ever reach an agreement to cut carbon pollution.

What made it different this time? For one thing, after the debacle in Copen-

hagen, climate negotiators backed away from the idea of a legally binding treaty that would force nations to cut carbon pollution. In Paris, they tried a potluck approach. Each country came to the conference with its own voluntary commitment – or "Intended Nationally Determined Contributions," in the parlance of the U.N. "The beauty of INDCs is that they harness each nation's self-interest in the service of international climate goals," says Dan Dudek, head of the China program for the Environmental Defense Fund. "It's not what you are forced to do – it's what *can* you do? And that's a lot more likely to inspire innovation and compliance than some authoritarian regime."

Another big factor was Mother Nature. While climate negotiators have been dithering for two decades, the world has been heating up. Glaciers are melting, droughts more extreme, rainfall more exaggerated. 2015 is likely to be the hottest year on record. "We are all facing the reality of climate change now," Fu Sha, a member of the Chinese delegation in Paris, said to me. And it's not just climate impacts that were driving negotiators: Sha pointed out that during the Paris conference, air pollution in Beijing was worse than it had been in months. "People are very unhappy about it," she said. "It could have impact on political stability in China, so we need to do something."

The biggest difference in Paris, however, was President Obama's willingness to put time, energy and political muscle into getting a deal done. For decades, the U.S. – which was surpassed by China as the biggest carbon polluter on the planet in 2007 – had been seen as a hypocritical bully, chastising other nations to cut carbon pollution while doing little if any-



thing to address its own fossil-fuel addiction. That changed with Obama, who pushed through aggressive fuel-efficiency standards for vehicles, used his executive authority to pass rules limiting carbon pollution from coal plants, and killed the Keystone pipeline – all of which boosted the credibility of the U.S. in Paris. In addition, he launched an intensive diplomatic mission to find common ground with the Chinese, resulting in a joint agreement last September that resolved many of the thorniest issues between the two nations and extracted a commitment from the Chinese to cap carbon pollution by 2030 and contribute \$3 billion in financing to help poor nations.

Yet despite Obama's best efforts and the endless cheery group shots of international heads of state, I saw another reality on the ground in Paris, one that didn't make the front pages: just how dangerously close the entire situation came to falling apart until the very last minute.

IN MID-OCTOBER, CLIMATE NEGOTIATORS met in Bonn, Germany, for the last of the formal meetings before the Paris conference. For those looking for a progressive outcome, it did not look good. "I was concerned," says Todd Stern, a thin, precise man known for his blunt negotiating tactics as the U.S. State Department's lead climate negotiator. What was most worrying was the old divide between the developed and the developing world, which had been codified in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, and had remained a sticking point for years in the negotiations. Basically, it argued that developed-world nations were rich, had caused the problem of climate change, and therefore should solve it. That meant cutting emissions, paying for damages and adaptation in the developing world, and generally carrying the burden for fixing this problem that they caused.

This approach seemed appropriate 20 years ago, but now the world had changed. China was rich and getting richer. Ditto for

Brazil and India. President Obama's diplomatic deal with China had gone a long way toward breaking up the old logjam between developed and developing countries about who should pay, and who is responsible. After all, now that China had taken on some of the obligations of a rich nation, it increased the pressure on up-and-coming developing nations. And getting them into the carbon-cutting and clean-energy-financing game was crucial to having a chance of slowing climate change.

But the U.S. and China's unlikely alliance wasn't the only story. Perhaps the greatest surprise in Paris was that one of the most important players in the negotiations came from one of the world's smallest nations: the Marshall Islands. The Marshall Islands are part of a negotiating block of small island states like Kiribati, the Bahamas and the Maldives. The low-lying islands were among the most vulnerable nations in the world, but they didn't have much economic power – or much weight

in the climate talk. In Copenhagen, the main thrust of their negotiating strategy had been to argue that the rich nations of the world should pay them to adapt to climate change, as well as for loss and damages. Given that the wealthy countries were the ones whose carbon pollution was putting the islands' very existence at risk, this wasn't an unreasonable demand. Not surprisingly, the rich nations of the world weren't too receptive.

In the lead up to Paris, Tony de Brum, the foreign minister of the Marshall Islands, and other island leaders decided to take a more sophisticated approach. The Marshall Islands brought in experienced outside advisers to guide them through negotiations and reach out to the media.

He called the idea of moving away from the island a kind of cultural genocide.

De Brum quietly coordinated building a new coalition for Paris, one that would push for limiting warming to 1.5 C, and zero emissions by midcentury. De Brum felt secrecy was important: He wanted to build alliances before other, less-progressive nations could undermine things. "We understood we could band together, and paint for the world a picture of what climate change is doing," says de Brum. Before long, de Brum and other island leaders noticed strange behavior with their e-mail accounts and assumed they had been hacked. Thereafter, they handwrote all their sensitive communications on paper.

They also discovered that not everyone

rorist attack at an Eagles of Death Metal concert on November 13th. The next day, he kicked off the negotiations with President Xi Jinping of China and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, who were there among 150 or so other heads of state – but it was only during the second week of the conference, after national leaders had left, that the real horse trading began. On Sunday night, Stern attended a dinner with de Brum and some other delegates from small island states at Drouant, a hip restaurant near the Paris Opera. Stern sat across from de Brum and next to Enele Sopoaga, the prime minister of Tuvalu, a Pacific island that is already gravely threatened by sea-level rise, and they discussed a number of issues key to both the

“I’M AN ISLAND BOY,” OBAMA REASSURED THE LEADERS OF BARBADOS AND THE MARSHALL ISLANDS IN A SHOW OF U.S. SOLIDARITY WITH VULNERABLE NATIONS.

They also understood that, to be effective, they needed to broaden their message and talk less about money and more about ambition. Most importantly, they needed to help the world see what climate change was doing to vulnerable people.

De Brum, 70, is an ideal carrier for this message. He has a wise, grandfatherly manner about him, with gray hair and glasses that are always slipping down his nose. He had spent years negotiating with U.S. officials over damage from nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands in the 1940s and 1950s. He was also capable of blunt talk. Last year, impatient with the progress of U.S. negotiations, he called for Obama to replace Stern with Michael Bloomberg (“I regret that now,” de Brum says). He openly mocked one U.S. official’s idea that if the Marshall Islands were destroyed, they could all move to Wyoming.

was concerned about the extermination of a few island nations. At a recent conference convened to outline the Paris agreement, de Brum urged negotiators to build more ambition into the deal, lest it fall far short of what was needed to save places like the Marshall Islands. India’s Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar listened, then said, “So what?”

In a deft political move, de Brum responded by saying, “I think what my colleague meant was, ‘So what are we going to do about it?’”

WHEN PRESIDENT OBAMA ARRIVED in Paris at the beginning of the conference, one of the first things he did was lay a white rose at the makeshift memorial outside the Bataclan theater, where 89 people had been killed in a ter-

U.S. and the island nations, including loss and damages. Over a dinner of roasted cod, Stern talked about the need for unity among ambitious countries, while the Colombia negotiator talked about worries of a “G-2 stitch-up” – meaning the widespread fear that the U.S. and China would band together to push a low-ambition agreement, with no room for other countries to have a voice.

A few days later, Kerry announced publicly that the U.S. was joining de Brum’s covert coalition – Stern dubbed it “the High Ambition Coalition.” Not that this was a surprise to anyone in Paris. After all, Obama had spent time with a small group that included the prime ministers and presidents of Barbados, St. Lucia, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands. “I’m an island boy,” Obama reassured them. (“That’s when I knew they were going to be OK,”

FROM LEFT: CAROLYN KASTER/AP IMAGES; SKYLYNK/SHUTTERSTOCK; CBS/LANDOV; SPACE: INNOXENTY MOGZLOV/SHUTTERSTOCK; 5GYES/OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY; MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY; CRAIG RUTTLE/AP IMAGES

THREAT ASSESSMENT THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE SCARY

WITH US

- Obama** takes executive action on **gun control**.
- Wind power** hits new record: Now enough to power 19 million homes.
- The Beatles** come to streaming services.
- SpaceX** sticks the landing.
- No war on **cops**: 2015 was one of the safest for police in recorded history.
- Congress bans polluting **microbeads**.
- Bill Cosby** indicted.
- Martin Shkreli** frog-marched.

LEADING THE CHARGE Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the opening of the conference



de Brum says.) "It was a brilliant move," Al Gore told me. Joining the island coalition not only increased the U.S.'s moral authority but also disarmed a potential bomb in the negotiations. "If the Marshall Islands walked out on the deal because they thought it was too weak, they could have derailed the whole thing," one veteran climate negotiator told me. Joining de Brum's coalition also allowed the U.S. to show concern for small, vulnerable nations, while maintaining a hard line against any language in the agreement that suggested liability for loss and damages related to climate change – a key strategic goal for the U.S.

But as the week rolled on, momentum stalled. To help unstick things, Obama placed a series of calls from Washington, first to Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, then to Prime Minister Modi

of India. Finally, at 10:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 10th (Washington, D.C., time), he connected with President Xi of China. According to one White House official, Obama and Xi reaffirmed the details of their joint agreement, and made clear that it was each of their responsibilities to lead other nations. In other words, one of the ways Xi could help was to make sure the Chinese delegation did what it could to bring India along. As the leader of one of the world's biggest polluters, as well as a nation with millions of people living in poverty, Modi was particularly concerned that India not be on the hook for big financial commitments to other developing nations. In addition, India's negotiators argued that if the U.S. and other rich countries wanted India to cut carbon, they owed it to India to hand over patents and intellectual-property rights for the latest

clean-energy technology. Not surprisingly, U.S. negotiators balked, explaining, accurately, that patents and intellectual-property rights couldn't be traded like candy.

Despite Obama's calls, by Thursday night, a day before the deadline to finalize the agreement, key negotiations were still moving slowly. The night began with a full meeting of the nations, which got stuck in yet another debate about the differences between developed and developing countries on transparency, ambition and finance. "If we're still holding onto these positions, we have a problem," says James Fletcher, the environment minister for St. Lucia. To help resolve these differences, at about 11 p.m. the French broke into an *indaba* (a Zulu style of meeting), which was more informal. Kerry had returned to his hotel in central Paris to make a secure call to the White House, but U.S. negotiators summoned him back around midnight for what one of his staffers called "an intervention." Kerry took a seat among the delegates, translation headphones around his neck. After listening to the debate for a while, he said, "I'm troubled by some of what I've been hearing." He pointed out that even if the old divisions between rich and poor nations had been erased in this agreement, there was still clear differentiation on important matters like finance and expectations for emissions reductions. As Kerry argued, the very fact that contributions were voluntarily determined by each nation meant that the agreement was a monument to differentiation. He urged the delegates to keep their eye on the bigger picture. "Don't nitpick this agreement to death," he pleaded.

At 2 a.m., the group again broke into smaller meetings. Nobody had moved their positions much. The Malaysian delegate argued that poor countries were still expected to do too much and couldn't be held to long-term carbon-reduction targets, and that coming back every five years to propose

TOP: JIM WATSON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; BOTTOM, FROM LEFT: ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE FUND; KNS, DIGITALLY ALTERED BY "ROLLING STONE"; WANCHAI ORSU/K/SHUTTERSTOCK; ERICH SCHLEGEL/GETTY IMAGES; RICE FAMILY; FOX3NEWS; UTAH: MIKE DRAV/SHUTTERSTOCK; TIMOTHY D. EASLEY/AP IMAGES



AGAINST US

Methane leak in California pollutes as much as driving 7 million cars.

North Korea claims successful **H-Bomb** test.

Oberlin students: Bad dining-hall **sushi** is "cultural appropriation."

Open carry comes to Texas.

No charges against the **cop** who killed Tamir Rice.

Utah dating service: "Where **white** people meet."

North Pole records balmy 33-degree temps in dead of winter.

New **Kentucky** governor reverses executive order, disenfranchises 140,000 ex-cons.

more ambitious carbon reductions was too burdensome.

"I got very nervous, because it felt to me like it was their last roll of the dice to try to deliver a very minimalist agreement," says Dean Bialek, an adviser with Independent Diplomats, a consulting firm that was working closely with the Marshall Islands. "We sent messages out to all the progressive countries and got ministers out of offices, and in some cases out of bed, in order to come into the room and make their presences felt and deliver strong messages," Bialek recalls. "I said to the delegates in the room, 'We're not going to be able to accept something that removes all the ambitious elements. We can't go along with last-minute eliminations of things we have been negotiating for many months, if not years. You might say all that is unacceptable to you, but an agreement that is completely devoid of ambition won't be acceptable to us. So this last-minute deletion game is not on.'"

When things finally wrapped up at 5 a.m., members of the U.S. delegation weren't popping champagne corks yet, but they trusted the French would find a way to pull it all together in the next 24 hours.

BY EARLY SATURDAY afternoon, the agreement looked like a done deal.

The last sticking point had been the wording on the finance language, and by morning, all the big players had signed off on it. Kerry, Stern and Brian Deese, a senior adviser to Obama, were in the U.S. delegation office, waiting for the final draft of the text to be released. Outside the door, the garbage overflowed with paper, sandwich wrappers and a stack of air-mattress boxes – a tribute to the all-nighters the U.S. delegation had pulled getting this deal together.

At 1:30 p.m., the French diplomatic team released the final text of the agreement. The U.S. team quickly printed it out, and Kerry, Deese and others sat around a table reading it. Stern got to page 21 of the agreement and noticed something was wrong in Article 4, which was a key passage about emissions reductions. The text had previously said that developed nations "should" reduce emissions by whatever amount they had proposed. A key point,

because "should" was a suitably ambiguous term. More importantly, it was not a legally binding phrase, and a significant part of the U.S. strategy was built around putting together an agreement with emissions targets that were *not* legally binding – and therefore didn't have to go before the Senate. Stern and others in the U.S. delegation had discussed this with Xie Zhenhua, the top Chinese official at the conference who agreed with it, and French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, who was in charge of the negotiations, had seen it as well. "There

many developing nations who felt pushed around by the U.S. also thought the phrase "should" was too weak. Was this an attempt at sabotage by someone who wanted to see the whole agreement brought down? The Saudis, who were expert at throwing a monkey wrench into things, were certainly one possibility. Another was one of the left-leaning Latin nations like Bolivia who thought the U.S. was getting off too easy on financial commitments. Or even the Russians, who had been very quiet during the entire negotiations.

Nobody on the U.S. team knew (they insist they still don't). Nor did they know how it had happened. Had the computers used to draft the agreement been hacked? Or had someone on the French drafting team accidentally cut-and-paste the wrong piece of text? If Stern had not noticed the change, an agreement might have been passed that the U.S. could not support – or at least one that the U.S. would have had to use lots of diplomatic muscle to change at the very last minute. Either way, it was not the happy ending the U.S. delegation – or President Obama, for that matter – was looking for.

A few hours later, Kerry, Deese and Stern walked into the main plenary room, where roughly 2,000 people from around the world had gathered in anticipation of the historic passage of the climate agreement. "We were not sure what we would find,"

Deese recalls. It was clear that many other countries had not heard about this yet, and when they did, some were unsettled. "You could see countries starting to talk among themselves," one State Department official says. "You could see more countries starting to open up text. Other parties coming over with hand-printed copies of the text. It was starting to go viral." Even if the U.S. delegation suspected that the change in the text was no accident, they decided not to press the issue. What was important was closing the deal. Kerry, Deese and Stern worked the room, huddling with delegates from key countries like India, China and South Africa, assuring them that, whatever had happened, the French were going to fix it. The U.S. delegation feared that if some nation challenged the word change during the plenary session, others would



1

THE NEGOTIATORS

(1) Kerry and top advisers hammer out the summit's final draft. (2) Tony de Brum (center) leads members of the "High Ambition Coalition." (3) Al Gore speaks with a Nigerian minister.



2



3

was never a particle of doubt about the phrasing of that sentence," Stern told me.

But in reading the final text, Stern noticed that the sentence had been entirely rephrased, with the key word "should" replaced with the more definitive word "shall." For the U.S., the difference between "shall" and "should" was the difference between a deal they could accept and one they could not. "It obviously was not a typo," a U.S. official told me. Kerry immediately got on the phone with Fabius, who reacted with genuine surprise, assuring him that it had to be a mistake and that he would look into it. For the next few hours, Kerry and the rest of the U.S. delegation were anxious and concerned.

What had happened? No one thought that Fabius or anyone around him was playing games. But it was well-known that

jump in with other grievances and the whole agreement would unravel. And indeed it started to happen. "I saw the Malaysian negotiator go over to the China desk and say, 'Look, are we going to oppose this?'" a delegate for a small island state recalls. "But Su Wei, China's lead negotiator, very clearly said to him, 'Just sit down and keep quiet. This is going through.'"

But it wasn't quite over. Paul Oquist, head of the Nicaraguan delegation, was up in the front of the room, talking with Fabius and other French officials, insisting that he wanted to use this opportunity to bring up broader criticisms of the agreement. The Russians and the Cubans tried to talk him out of it, and Kerry got on the phone to Nicaragua, eventually reaching the first lady, urging her to communicate to Oquist that holding up the conference was not a good idea.

After about a half hour, Fabius had had enough. He abruptly broke off conversation with the Nicaraguan delegation, then jumped up onstage, where he was flanked by President François Hollande and U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. He did some quick work to pass off the shall/should fiasco as a mistake in the text, then moved quickly to adopt the agreement. "I see the room, I see the reaction is positive, I hear no objection," he announced, then slammed down his green gavel. "The Paris climate accord is adopted," he declared just after 7 p.m. The man standing next to me, a delegate from the Maldives whom I had never spoken to, grabbed me and hugged me. His eyes were wet with tears.

THE ADOPTION OF THE Paris accord was a powerful moment. Sadly, as everyone in the room that night knew, climate change is not a problem that can be solved with the slam of a gavel. "Paris worked in part because of a big deadline and conspicuous failures from not meeting it," says David Victor, a professor of international relations at the University of California, San Diego. "Now we are in a murky zone with huge lists of difficult things to do. And few really robust deadlines."

Before it can enter legal force, the agreement will need to be formally ratified by 55 nations. That won't be a problem in the U.S. – because of the way the agreement is structured, President

Obama can sign off on it without submitting it to the Senate. But it will likely take a year or longer for other nations to formalize the agreement. Meanwhile, there is still a lot of detail work to do regarding the rules on complex issues like how emis-

administrations? This is the real global governance issue."

There is also the issue of U.S. leadership. This deal came together largely because of the drive and political skill of President Obama and Secretary Kerry, and it happened to coincide with the rise in prosperity in China, which gave the nation the money and temperament to address this problem. But in the long term, U.S. leadership on climate is questionable, largely because half of Congress is bought off by the fossil-fuel industry and won't let stronger action on climate change through.

Lest anyone in Paris forget that dinosaurs still roam in the halls of Congress, during the conference, the Heartland Institute – a U.S. think tank with ties to the Koch brothers that is home base for climate deniers – held a conference at a hotel near the center of Paris that advanced all the old arguments that climate change was just a tree-hugger fantasy. And back in Washington, the House science committee held hearings to question the science and economics of climate change. The hearing featured the rhetorical sleight-of-hand of Bjørn Lomborg, a well-known Danish economist who argued that the Paris climate agreement, even if all INDCs were fully accounted for, would lower the Earth's temperature by the end of the century only 0.306 C, so why bother?

Thanks largely to the dysfunctional state of climate politics in America, it is even questionable whether the U.S. can fulfill the obligations it made in Paris, much less ratchet them up in years to come. And one or two terms of a Denier-in-Chief could derail American leadership on this issue. China, of course, could emerge as the deal-maker in future negotiations, but China is not exactly known for its good governance practices, nor for altruistic thinking about the greater good of the planet.

In the end, the most striking thing about the Paris agreement may be the degree to which it bets the future of civilization on individual actions. The summit was not about the establishment of a global carbon police force – it was an attempt to write the rules so that people are inspired to go out and fix the problem on their own, either as individuals or as nations, and to lend a hand (or a dollar) to others who are less fortunate. And depending on your view of human nature, that may be the most risky bet of all.

WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?

The Paris agreement is a done deal. But the real work of living with a rapidly changing climate has just begun. Here are five things we have to do next

1 Elect a Climate-Smart President in 2016

If the Paris agreement proved anything, it was the importance of presidential leadership. The next president needs to keep up the momentum, continuing to push for tougher measures in international climate negotiations, as well as find a way to convince Congress of the urgency of the issue.

2 Continue Full-Court Press in UNFCCC Meetings

"The Paris Agreement is just a broad outline," says Elliot Diringer of the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions in Arlington, Virginia. "Now they have to fill in the details." Key issues like the mechanism for emission monitoring and verification are hugely important and still need to be worked out, lest the agreement be rendered toothless and ineffective.

3 Cut Side Deals With Other Nations

It's tough to cut a deal with nearly 200 nations – so why not push for more one-on-one agreements between the U.S. and, say, India? Or Brazil? Or even the small island states. The U.S.-China joint agreement was key to success in Paris. Let's do more deals like it.

4 Put a Price on Carbon

As Al Gore often says, it's time we "stop using the atmosphere as an open sewer." The best way to do that is to put a price on carbon pollution. About 35 countries and 20 cities and states have implemented some form of a carbon-pricing system. China is planning a national cap-and-trade system. The U.S. should do the same.

5 Hit the Streets

In Paris, negotiators felt the heat of the streets. They knew they were being held accountable, thanks to civic activism all over the world that demanded action. The louder you shout, the more likely you will be heard.

sions will actually be monitored and verified. But the real threat to the agreement is not procedural but political: "The most critical question is how to sustain political momentum," says the Environmental Defense Fund's Dan Dudek. "As governments change, how can the will to implement INDCs be mustered over successive



Leonardo Cruise

LEONARDO DICAPRIO IS IN HIS MOST RIVETING MOVIE IN YEARS. BUT HE REALLY JUST WANTS TO SAVE THE PLANET

By Stephen Rodrick

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK SELIGER



DiCaprio in
New York, 2015



LEONARDO WILHELM DICAPRIO'S parents hung a painting above his crib in the grotty 1970s East Hollywood neighborhood of Los Angeles when he was a baby. The painting wasn't an ac-

tion shot of Peter Rabbit or Curious George. No, it was a reproduction of Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch's three-paneled "Garden of Earthly Delights," a dystopian visual description of Eden being found and lost. It is one of DiCaprio's earliest memories. ¶ "You literally see Adam and Eve being given paradise," says DiCaprio, his blue eyes peering above sunglasses in

a Miami Beach restaurant that has somehow worked "SoHo" into its name. Underneath the table he fidgets his feet in and out of canvas loafers. He drifts away for a moment. DiCaprio just finished shooting an interview for a climate-change film he's making. (Original working title: *Are We Fucked?*) He's already been to India flood plains and the Antarctica polar cap, and now he's not far from Miami playgrounds where he once reputedly left a nightclub with every woman from his VIP section. All, according to DiCaprio, could be washed away.

He snaps back to the painting. "Then you see in the middle this overpopulation and excess, people enjoying the fruits of what this environment's given us," he says. He laughs a sad laugh punctuated by the DiCaprio smile that can be mistaken for a sneer. "Then the last panel is just charred, black skies with a burnt-down apocalypse." He stops for a second before shrugging. "That was my favorite painting."

Halfway between mother and maker, Leonardo DiCaprio is not unhappily marooned between the bright light of his own life – a looming Oscar, a personal fossil collection, a chauffeured rental Tesla – and the bleakness of the overheated world he inhabits with denialist Republicans and a Bangladesh coastline that could be nearly a quarter underwater by 2050. He wants us to move off fossil fuels entirely and wonders where we would be if we had spent billions on finding renewable energy sources rather than on the Iraq War.

"He has an intellectual restlessness," says longtime collaborator Martin Scorsese. "He devours books and texts and information."

Contributing editor STEPHEN RODRICK profiled Martin O'Malley in November.

A friend might tell DiCaprio to lighten up, but that's not going to happen. "There are very few civilians who have the same understanding that this guy has of climate change. Leo's a wonk," says Mark Ruffalo, who has just combined forces with DiCaprio on the Solutions Project, a group of scientists and stars hoping to move America toward full renewable-energy use. "He's putting his ass on the line."

DiCaprio's life-is-brutish-and-short worldview has permeated his post-*Titanic* film choices, especially his work with Scorsese, from *Gangs of New York* to *The Wolf of Wall Street*. He is now starring in *The Revenant*, the bleak tale of trapper Hugh Glass, whose body is demolished by a very angry grizzly, and who loses his family to the viciousness of the White Man. (Making matters worse, he must drag around Moses' neck beard.)

"We went with the purpose of seeing what nature was saying," says DiCaprio of shooting "The Revenant." The response? "This crazy, insane message that stopped production."

Eventually, Glass is double-crossed by a man with half a scalp. He is left for dead, rides a horse off a cliff, sleeps in its carcass and chews on a bison liver. He remains mute for weeks. These are the lighter moments between arrows exploding arteries and knives removing testicles. During the *Fitzcarraldo*-esque shoot in the Canadian Rockies and Argentina, director Alejandro González Iñárritu burned through crew members. Iñárritu says that in their downtime he and DiCaprio would chew their own facial hair to pass the hours.

After that experience, maybe a *Catch Me If You Can*-style light comedy for DiCaprio? Not bloody likely.

"I would love to do something even darker," says DiCaprio with a devious smile. He knows he sounds slightly mad. "I don't know, like how would you penetrate the mind of somebody like Travis Bickle in *Taxi Driver*? There's a word in German that they don't have in the English language that's called *schadenfreude*. It means humiliation for somebody else." He smirks. "It's what I see sometimes when I watch certain politicians, but it can be done in movies, like when Travis Bickle takes [Cybill Shepherd] to the porno theater for his first date. You're like, 'Oh, God, please don't do this!'"

Not everything is so dark. There are still starlets, scuba diving and industrialist friends named Vlad with giant yachts. I ask him later if he's afraid of slipping down into the gloaming like some character from a movie about a doomed 1912 cruise ship.

"I work hard at trying to create a balance."

Successful?

"We'll see."

He makes his excuses and stands up. It's time to jump into a helicopter and check out the suburban sprawl that threatens the Everglades. He takes a puff on a vaping device, exuding a maple-syrup smell that makes me want pancakes. He pulls a watch cap over his eyes and ducks out through the restaurant's service alley. His chauffeured Tesla peels out for the heliport. A man left behind speaks into a wrist device, inadvertently proving that Leonardo DiCaprio is not just a man but also an organic commodity that can be used for good or evil.

"The package has left the building. I repeat: The package has left the building."



INTO THE WILD
 “He uses his body and a pair of eyes to convey so many emotions,” says Iñárritu.

HERE’S THE TRANSITORY question on the table: Is this the year Leonardo DiCaprio finally wins an Oscar, after four nominations?

“Sure, everyone likes to be recognized, but that’s out of my hands – other people control those things,” DiCaprio tells me as he preps for an interview with a hurricane expert. “I will say it would help the film, bring it to more people.”

The Revenant is like free guacamole to hungry film critics, with *Birdman* director Iñárritu at the helm and best-living cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki shooting scenery that out-Malicks Terrence Malick. But it could be a tough sell to punters plopping down \$10 at the West Des Moines multiplex on date night. There are only two female characters in the film. One is murdered; the other is gang-raped by French trappers. The film is 156 minutes long, and it becomes quickly evident that any white character not named Hugh Glass is going to make the worst possible moral choice imaginable. But DiCaprio’s performance holds this cinematic hellscape together. (When Iñárritu saw him with his long beard, he exulted, “This man is a fucking trapper!”)

DiCaprio is largely silent for the film, a feat harder than it sounds.

“He uses his body, which is wounded, and a pair of eyes to convey so many emotions in takes that are six or eight minutes long,” says Iñárritu. “He has to make us believe that he is cold, that he is wounded, that he is devastated, that he is angry, that he is hopeless. Without one word, you have to understand what this guy is thinking and feeling.” There’s a scene where DiCaprio finds his dead son and is broken. But he hears a crow singing beyond the trees. You can see him taking in death and life simultaneously.

“He was interacting and listening to every piece of nature and wind, and reacting to that,” remembers Iñárritu. “That’s the most difficult thing to do, and in the moment that he did that, I said, ‘This guy is really present. He has this rhythm, and he owns that rhythm.’”

FOR DICAPRIO, THE ROOTS OF *The Revenant* and his environmental work all began with a meeting with then-Vice President Al Gore in 1998. DiCaprio had grown up with a melancholy for extinct creatures – he once impressed Dr.

Kirk Johnson, the director of the National Museum of Natural History, with his knowledge of the long-gone great auk, a bird hunted to extinction in the 1800s.

“I remember the thing that I got the most sad about when I was little was the loss of species that have been as a result of mankind’s intrusion on nature,” says DiCaprio, whose Los Angeles home features a massive fossil collection. He then mentions three species, only one of which I’d ever heard of: “Like the quagga or the Tasmanian tiger or the dodo bird.”

Titanic came out in 1997, and DiCaprio went from promising actor of his generation to one of the most famous faces on the planet. There was the requisite news of bawdy behavior and a slew of model girlfriends, some of which still trickles out in the tabloids, as he remains single. You can ask him about it, but he will wave it off, saying, “I liked it when you went to see a movie and you didn’t know everything about the actor.”

Like Warren Beatty, Robert Redford and Paul Newman before him, DiCaprio longed to be seen as something more than just a panty-dropper. A friend set up a meeting with Gore. The vice president sketched out the planet and the atmo-

sphere on a chalkboard and told the actor, "You want to be involved in environmental issues? This is the most important thing facing all of humanity and the future."

At first, it was just appearances at Earth Day events and the occasional conference, and then there was the narration of his climate-change film *The 11th Hour* in 2007. But in the past decade, it has gone from passion to obsession. "I am consumed by this," says DiCaprio. "There isn't a couple of hours a day where I'm not thinking about it. It's this slow burn. It's not 'aliens invading our planet next week and we have to get up and fight to defend our country,' but it's this inevitable thing, and it's so terrifying."

A couple of years ago, DiCaprio met with a casual friend, the actor Fisher Stevens, once known as Michelle Pfeiffer's ex and the ethnically dubious star of *Short Circuit 2*, but now an accomplished documentary producer. The two had become reacquainted while filming the disappearing reefs in the Galapagos, an event made memorable for DiCaprio's scuba tank malfunctioning while shooting footage and DiCaprio desperately looking for someone to help him to the top. He (of course) found Ed Norton, who shared air with DiCaprio as they slowly ascended to avoid the bends.

Stevens and DiCaprio talked of shooting a climate-change film that would feature DiCaprio as a man on a global pursuit for the truth. The film would be equal parts gonzo, absurd and scare-the-shit-out-of-you testimonials from scientists and leaders. (There's a Joaquin Phoenix quality to some of it, with DiCaprio, in full *Revenant* shagginess, interviewing a pristine Bill Clinton with the New York skyline behind him.)

Just as preproduction was starting for the doc, funding came through for *The Revenant*. Rather than pass on either project, DiCaprio chose to see a symmetry between the two, with Hugh Glass representing a man on the front end of the West's destruction of the land and the extermination of other cultures, and DiCaprio's documentary set two centuries later as the world faces the bill for all the raping and pillaging. The links grew stronger as DiCaprio visited the hellish Alberta, Canada, tar-sand oil fields, several hours north of the breathless mountains and streams of the *Revenant* set. Meanwhile, filming was repeatedly hampered by a lack of snow as Alberta "enjoyed" the warmest winter on record. The connections left Iñárritu and DiCaprio shaking their heads as they suffered through multiple delays.

"It was a parallel universe," remembers Iñárritu. "We discussed it at length. It was scary to be depicting how it all started in this country, and now we're suffering 200 years of consequences for that. It was a mirror. It was funny and scary as hell."

"We went out there with the purpose of discovering something and seeing what nature was saying," says DiCaprio about the shoot. He flexes his hands open and shut in frustration. "That was never directly articulated, but it was like, 'OK, what happens if we put ourselves in the elements? What are we gonna discover?' The thing that I was left with was this crazy, insane message of nature fighting back and essentially stopping production." Later, he put it more bluntly. "The big question is, is it all too late?"

As the documentary crew travels from global bleak spot to bleak spot, Stevens has occasionally had to remind DiCaprio not to wallow too much in hopelessness. "I'm more the light and he's the dark," says Stevens with a grin. "I'm always say-

In the past decade, climate change has gone from his passion to an obsession. "I am consumed by this," says DiCaprio. "There isn't a couple of hours every day that I'm not thinking about it."

ing, 'Don't be so fucking pessimistic, man. If we make a movie where it's already too late, what are we making the movie for?'" Stevens smiles hopefully. "Leo gets that." We'll see. DiCaprio has final cut.

IT'S THE SUNDAY AFTER THANKSGIVING, and Miami Beach is in a sleepy interlude between turkey and the hordes arriving later in the week for Art Basel, which is Sundance for the art crowd. Stevens and his crew are setting up in the city hall offices of Mayor Philip Levine to ask him about how rising waters are threatening the city (a line of questioning partially inspired by a 2013 *ROLLING STONE* article by Jeff Goodell). DiCaprio arrives looking tired in a short-sleeved polka-dot blue shirt and droopy jeans exposing powder-blue boxers. He stretches theatrically.

"I think I got too much sleep last night." Stevens laughs. "That would be a first."

DiCaprio is two-tracking obligations as details of *The Revenant* have started seeping out and his camp has had to tamp down rumors that he was sexually as-

saulted by a grizzly in one of the film's gory passages ("That's not what's happening"). Then a veteran movie blogger said that he loved the film but there was no way women were going to sit through the gorefest. "I think it's silly, and I think that the women I've spoken to really enjoyed the movie," says DiCaprio.

But after a quick hairbrush session, DiCaprio shifts into environmental-warrior mode. Stevens gives him a list of questions, but he largely wings it. First, DiCaprio and Levine talk of mutual friends, including billionaire Russian construction magnate Vladislav Doronin.

"Our good mutual friend Vlad says hello," says Levine, before telling a story about Doronin offering to take him out for an ocean swim and Levine joking about his fear of not returning.

"Vlad is a lot of fun," admits DiCaprio, adding how much he enjoys Doronin's Aman Resorts, discrete seven-star accommodations scattered across the globe.

Then they begin to talk. DiCaprio asks Levine if he's worried about declining real-estate prices.

"I'm not going to preside over Miami Beach becoming Venice," says Levine. "I think property levels are just going to continue to rise."

DiCaprio doesn't agree, saying he'd already unloaded his beach house: "I wouldn't take that bet."

Levine wants to show DiCaprio some of the work the glitzy resort town is doing to lessen the impact of rising tides, so we pile into the Tesla while the mayor travels in a black SUV. DiCaprio understands no mayor is going to come out in public and say, "Sell your condo, we're screwed," but he doesn't share his optimism. "You know what they're doing now?" DiCaprio asks. "They're building high-rises where the lobby can flood and the rest of the building can just continue on. But he's right, prices are still going up. It's unbelievable."

We stop at a section of streets that the city has raised four feet to provide a bulwark against the sea. The two do a walk-and-talk while Sunday brunchers begin to gawk and stalk at a careful distance.

We eventually reach the water, and it's horrifying in an affluent kind of way. The water level has risen to nearly equal with boat docks, rendering ladders leading into the ocean irrelevant. DiCaprio and Levine walk out on a tenuous sea wall and look across the bay to where, coincidentally, their friend Vlad's yacht glitters in the morning light. The mayor admits that the city needs \$400 million to build new sea walls and a system of pumps and to raise roads. And that number doesn't even include sand from the Bahamas.

DiCaprio nearly does a spit take.

"The Bahamas?"

The mayor nods and says Bahamas sand can be cheaper than American sand.

During a stop in the interview, DiCaprio points at a tan older gentleman combing his luxurious silver hair on a balcony in a nearby high-rise.

"Look at that guy," says DiCaprio. "He has no idea what is going on." DiCaprio watches him with fascination for a moment and then makes a joke. "He probably knows that he'll be dead soon and won't have to worry about it." He glumly says goodbye to the mayor, and tosses his swag of Miami Beach caps and cuff links into his trunk.

He settles into the back of the Tesla.

"The Bahamas, did you hear that?"

The conversation turns to places like Bangladesh that don't have the

ing? Perhaps, but DiCaprio was and is single, and you can see skeezy womanizing at Buffalo Wild Wings on a Thursday night. There has been some twisted comeuppance; in 2005, DiCaprio had to get more than a dozen stitches to his billion-dollar face after a Hollywood Hills party when a former model slashed him with broken glass, a shot that may have been intended for someone else.

Beneath that reputation has been an actor devoted to his craft since his early teens. DiCaprio was partially raised by an underground artist, his father, George DiCaprio, a comic-book author and distributor. Leo grew up in Los Angeles, but not the Los Angeles of Hollywoodland.

Maguire. "I've got plenty of new friends through the years, too, but I've held on to some of them for 25 years now," says DiCaprio. "There's an inherent comfort level that can't be duplicated and can't be manufactured. You don't have to do catch-up interviews – they're up-to-date."

There was a part on the 1990s ABC sitcom *Growing Pains*, in the classic ratings-booster role of boy without a home. But it all changed when he beat out Maguire and others for the lead in an adaptation of Tobias Wolff's *This Boy's Life*, starring opposite Robert De Niro. DiCaprio's father had taken his boy to a screening of De Niro's *Midnight Run* a few years earlier and told him if he wanted to be an actor, De Niro

was the one to watch. DiCaprio thought he blew the audition by screaming his lines, but De Niro liked his intensity.

De Niro recommended DiCaprio to Scorsese, and when the actor and director worked together for the first time, on 2002's *Gangs of New York*, it was a 26-year-old DiCaprio who was dispatched to Daniel Day-Lewis' New York brownstone to try to lure him out of retirement, sitting with him on a Central Park bench and silently waiting for him to make the first move.

DiCaprio is cagey about his next film, but he's been casting about for a project that speaks to his politics. He dreams of releasing his documentary in tandem with *The Revenant*'s video release, and he has already optioned an unwritten book on the Volkswagen emissions scandal. There's a great narrative film to be made about the environment, insists DiCaprio – it's just a matter of finding the right project.

"I don't know how to crack this yet, but I would love to do something that isn't about waves crashing on the Empire State Building," he says.

We're eating at a posh Miami restaurant, and a stray little girl wanders by, with no clue that she is eyeing one of the world's most famous movie stars. DiCaprio takes off his sunglasses and offers a long *aww*. I ask him if he sees time in his life for a family. He responds abruptly, the only time in our two days together.

"Do you mean do I want to bring children into a world like this?" says DiCaprio. "If it happens, it happens. I'd prefer not to get into specifics about it, just because then it becomes something that is misquoted. But, yeah." He shifts uncomfortably in his chair. "I don't know. To articulate how I feel about it [Cont. on 64]



money to deal with the rising waters. "The story of climate change is gonna be places with the most military power to protect their own resources," says DiCaprio, hitting the vape pipe. "The billions of people that haven't contributed to this problem are gonna be the first to suffer."

Above, the sun tries to break through morning clouds and shine light through the Tesla's opaque roof. It is not successful.

THE IMAGE OF DICAPRIO AS an empty libertine gorging in his own garden of earthly delights – which has stuck since he rolled with a traveling pack of ruffians derisively labeled the Pussy Posse back in the 1990s – isn't any more true or false than it was with leading-man predecessors like Redford and George Clooney. (DiCaprio recently ended his relationship with model Kelly Rohrbach, according to reports; before that, the best rumor was of a casual liaison with Rihanna.) Has there been skeezy womaniz-

As a kid, he saw junkies in the alleyways and prostitutes at the nearby hotel. After a halcyon stay at a progressive school near UCLA, he returned to his neighborhood school for junior high, where he was regularly beaten up.

"I was a bit of a loudmouth, and I was in an environment where the elements aligned to have kids smack the hell outta me once in a while," DiCaprio tells me with a smile.

DiCaprio found refuge in drama classes and started hitting auditions, driven by his mother, Irmelin, his most patient supporter and critic. (She's been known to critique the wardrobe authenticity in his films.) There were cattle calls, a Matchbox commercial and a year when he wasn't cast in anything. Instead, he took to his room and spent a year watching movies with his father's guidance, developing a taste for films like *East of Eden* and *A Face in the Crowd*.

He knew acting was what he wanted to do and started making friends at auditions with other dreamers, like Tobey



The Flight of Twenty One Pilots

Why is the biggest new band of the past year so stressed out?

By Andy Greene



WHEN TWENTY ONE PILOTS FRONTMAN TYLER Joseph scrolls through his phone, there are hundreds of names in the contacts he doesn't quite recognize: kids from the band's hometown of Columbus, Ohio, who were the earliest fans of his two-man group, from back in the days when Joseph used to drive door-to-door hand-delivering tickets for club shows. When that grew too time-consuming, he and drummer Josh Dun would have fans meet them at a table outside the Chick fil-A in the Polaris mall's food court. On show



Joseph (right, with Dun) says his black makeup represents his insecurities.



days, Joseph's mom would stand outside the club and try to hawk tickets to passing Ohio State students. "She'd be like, 'Come see my son play music,'" recalls Joseph, who's 27 but could pass for a teenager, with a puppyish, Joseph Gordon-Levitt vibe that turns into something stranger and more intense onstage.

That was just four years ago. The duo's grassroots approach has, to their surprise, propelled them way, way beyond central Ohio. They are easily the biggest group to break out in the past year: In mid-January, Twenty One Pilots had a Top 10 single ("Stressed Out") and the country's Number Three album, lodged between Justin Bieber and One Direction. Weeks ago, they announced a 58-date arena tour, including two nearly sold-out shows at Madison Square Garden.

They're signed to the punk-leaning label Fueled by Ramen — launching pad for Fall Out Boy and Paramore — but Twenty One Pilots are one of the hardest-to-categorize hit acts in years, mixing angsty lyrics, Macklemore-style rhymes, Ben Folds-like piano pop, 311-ish reggae beats, hard-rock energy and the occasional ukulele ballad. Onstage, Joseph plays bass, piano and uke when he's not stalking around in smeared makeup and a bondage mask. Dun, a chilled-out former skater with an easy grin and gauges in his ears, helps them sound like a band, triggering prerecorded backing tracks as he plays. It's a seemingly odd combination that makes total sense to their teen fan base. "There was a lot of pressure to find a genre and stick to it," says Joseph. "People would tell me all the time, 'You can't be all things to everyone.' I would say, 'I'm not trying to be! I'm being what I want to be for myself.'"

Their current hit, the rap-rock throwback "Stressed Out," is about the harsh end of adolescence ("Used to dream of outer space, but now they're laughing at our face/Saying, 'Wake up, you need to make money'"). And backstage at *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* the week before Christmas, Joseph is doing his best to live like a kid again, gleefully flying down the quiet halls on his brand-new hoverboard, past uniformed NBC pages and frowning security guards. "How do I go forward?" he asks. "I just push my wiener out? I guess it just reads the ween!"

As showtime approaches, Joseph begins to transform, slathering black grease paint all over his neck and arms and trading his T-shirt and jeans for a stylish long black coat and dark pants. He stands up from the couch and begins pacing back and forth. "This makeup forces me to recognize what I'm trying to say on this stage with this song," he says. "I'm anxious to get up there and get this over with."

Associate editor ANDY GREENE interviewed Pete Dinklage last April.

They play the album track "Heavydirtysoul": Like most songs on their newest album, *Blurryface*, it delves deep into Joseph's insecurities. "There's an infestation in my mind's imagination," he speed-raps. Fallon is sitting in darkness at his desk, but he's banging his head along to the beat; Questlove is also impressed, tweeting later in the day, "Whoa...I wasn't ready!!!"

Joseph and Dun emerge from behind a red curtain into the *Tonight Show* hallway as Joseph's slim blond wife of nine months, Jenna, and members of their management team and road crew burst into applause. "Well," Joseph says, breathing heavily, "that was four minutes of hard work."

THE NAME TWENTY ONE PILOTS is also a philosophy for Joseph and Dun: It came from an Arthur Miller play, *All My Sons*, that Joseph was reading at Ohio State, about a war contractor who knowingly sends off faulty airplane parts to Europe during World

"I'd hide Green Day albums under my bed," says Dun of his conservative Christian upbringing.

War II, afraid that he'd lose money if he fessed up to the mistake; the decision results in the death of 21 airplane pilots. It resonated with Joseph, who declined a basketball scholarship from Otterbein University to focus on music. "I could relate to the fact that making the right decision in life sometimes takes more work," says Joseph. "It takes more time, and it can feel like you're going backward."

To this day, Joseph and Dun will warn each other that they are "sending out the parts" if they feel they're taking the easy route. As the duo grew more popular, they turned down record deals with signing bonuses, acted as their own roadies long after they were selling out large venues, and refused to trade in their van for a touring bus. More recently, they've declined significant sponsorship offers for their 2016 tour.

Joseph and Dun were both raised in conservative, religious households. Joseph's father was the principal of a Christian high school that Tyler attended; be-

fore that, he was home-schooled by his mother. "I told her I wanted to be a basketball player, and she made me take 500 shots every single day in the backyard," he says. "If I got closer to the basket and made layups, she didn't count them. She'd knock on the back window near the kitchen and point to the three-point line. I had to be done before dinner, and if I wasn't, I wasn't allowed to eat."

Things were even stricter at the Dun household. Video games and most rock or hip-hop albums were banned. "I'd hide albums like Green Day's *Dookie* under my bed," Dun says. "Sometimes they'd find them and get real mad. They'd find a Christian alternative, like Relient K, and make me listen to that." For a while, the only movies allowed in the house came from CleanFlicks, a Christian company that took Hollywood movies and edited out all the profanity, sexuality and violence. For a young Dun, it made watching movies like *The Terminator* quite confusing. "Some scenes they'd remove entirely," he says. "Watching those movies was an absolutely awful experience."

By the time he was a teenager, Dun was rebelling hard. "I just had this aggression," he says, noting that his parents nearly kicked him out when he was 14. "They almost sent me to a military school. They didn't know what to do with me, and I was always in detention. I never got into drugs or alcohol, but I would yell at my parents and just treat them terribly. Everything was an argument. Looking back, they were trying their best."

When his parents fell asleep, he'd break out his punk-pop CDs; eventually, they softened up on rock music, allowing him to assemble a drum kit in his basement piece by piece with his own money. He didn't go to college, moving in with a bunch of buddies instead and playing in local bands while scraping by working in the drum department of Guitar Center. "I was going nowhere," he says. "One day I said to my dad, 'Are you disappointed that I'm working a minimum-wage job and I didn't go to college?' I'll never forget his response. He said, 'It's not about how much money you make or what your job is, but it's more about your character. For that, I'm proud of you.' It gave me motivation."

JOSH, I HAVE A QUESTION for you," Joseph says. "Would you rather be attacked by 100 chicken-sized horses or one horse-sized chicken?"

Dun gives the question (inspired by a popular Internet meme) some thought. "There's pros and cons to both," he says. "A horse-sized chicken will have short legs, so I don't know how fast it would be."

Joseph disagrees. "Take how fast a regular chicken is, and times it by however big a horse is. You want to take the 100 chick-



IT TAKES TWO

Joseph (left) and Dun at New York's Hammerstein Ballroom in September.

en-sized horses all day long. You just kick them right in the snout. Dude, just picture the beak on a horse-sized chicken. And he's not just roaming around. He's, like, honed in on you."

It's a freezing-cold afternoon in Ohio a couple of days before New Year's, and Joseph and Dun are walking around a nearly deserted downtown Columbus, not far from where they first met in 2010. Joseph had taught himself piano by playing along to Beatles and Dion songs on the radio, impressing friends with how quickly he learned, and forming an early version of Twenty One Pilots with two friends. Dun first saw them at a club on the Ohio State campus. "I loved everything about the show except for one thing: I wasn't onstage playing also," he says. It would be another year before Joseph's original drummer quit and Dun got the job, but they had become best friends in the meantime. By 2012, Joseph had grown into a ferocious performer, climbing the scaffolding and diving into audiences. The duo became the biggest band in central Ohio, putting every spare penny into the band and focusing intensely on their local fans. The most important Columbus promoter, Adam Vanchoff, took notice when they played the 1,700-seat Newport Music Hall. "I was like, 'These local guys just sold out the Newport?'" says Vanchoff. "Nationally touring bands can't do that!"

Right now, Joseph and Dun are enjoying their first month off since their major-label debut came out in early 2013. They've spent the time hanging out with their families and old friends, but they've also logged many hours working on complex

backing tracks for their upcoming arena tour. "I know that concept gets a lot of flak," says Joseph of the tracks. "But we're so proud of them – we slave over them."

They head to Dun's parents' house; the drummer now lives in L.A. but crashes in his old bedroom when he's in Ohio, which is often. (Joseph and Jenna bought a house in Columbus and live there full-time.) They filmed much of the "Stressed Out" video at Dun's childhood home, so it's become a destination for Twenty One Pilots fans. Because the home number is listed, Dun says his parents have had to cancel the landline to put an end to the calls coming in at all hours.

A Christmas tree sits in the living room, next to a ceramic Nativity scene. There's not a single Twenty One Pilots photo or bit of memorabilia anywhere within sight, though the walls are covered with signs that say things like JOY and A LOVING FAMILY MINE TO TREASURE BETTER THAN WEALTH OF ANY MEASURE. Dun's basement bedroom has been stripped of most personal artifacts, but his decent-size DVD collection – which includes movies certain to be approved by CleanFlicks like *Finding Nemo* and *The Truman Show* – remains intact.

Dun takes out a bowl of two-day-old chili from the fridge, mixing in sour cream and cheese as the topic turns to his own religious views. "We're always questioning things," he says, "but I guess it's safe to say that we're both Christians." Dun's mother,

Laura, a small, cheerful blond woman in her fifties, comes downstairs to say hello; she is a nurse, and his father is a physical therapist. "Hey, Mrs. Dun," Joseph says. "This is good chili. I promise to not spill any on the couch."

"Call me Mama Dun," she says. "I would have fixed you something more if I knew you were coming over."

Mama Dun appears in the "Stressed Out" video along with all the other members of the combined Joseph and Dun clans, who all chant "Wake up, you need to make money" in unison. "Growing up, money is important," says Joseph. "And now I have a career where I'm making enough money to live. But I really want to give it to my parents, my family, charities and people around me." True to form, Joseph still drives around town in a beat-up Chevy Impala. In the coming months, he says that the band plans to start its own charity, something "Columbus-based."

The rise of Twenty One Pilots also means that the band has stopped apologizing for its unorthodox mix of styles. The follow-up single to "Stressed Out" was "Lane Boy," a reggae-infused track that is almost a mission statement, with Joseph singing, "They say, 'Stay in your lane, boy'/ But we go where we want to."

"It is true that if you hear our music described, it sounds unappealing," says Joseph as he gets ready to leave for his brother's high school basketball game. "I used to laugh and agree with people when they said it didn't make any sense."

"I'm going to stop saying that," he says. "It fits together into one body of work, because we made it."

EL CHAPO

A SECRET VISIT WITH THE MOST WANTED MAN IN THE WORLD

BY SEAN PENN

"The laws of conscience, which we pretend to be derived from nature, proceed from custom." —Montaigne

IT'S SEPTEMBER 28TH, 2015. MY HEAD IS swimming, labeling TracPhones (burners), one per contact, one per day, destroy, burn, buy, balancing levels of encryption, mirroring through Blackphones, anonymous e-mail addresses, unsent messages accessed in draft form. It's a clandestine horror show for the single most technologically illiterate man left standing. At 55 years old, I've never learned to use a laptop. Do they still make laptops? No fucking idea! It's 4:00 in the afternoon. Another gorgeous fall day in New York City. The streets are abuzz with the lights and sirens of diplomatic movement, heads of state, U.N. officials, Secret Service details, the NYPD. It's the week of the U.N. General Assembly. Pope Francis blazed a trail and left town two days before. I'm sitting in my room at the St. Regis Hotel with my colleague and brother in arms, Espinoza.

EDITOR'S NOTE

AS ROLLING STONE went to press, El Chapo Guzmán was arrested in Los Mochis, Sinaloa.

Disclosure: Some names have had to be changed, locations not named, and an understanding was brokered with the subject that this piece would be submitted for the subject's approval before publication. The subject did not ask for any changes.

Espinoza and I have traveled many roads together, but none as unpredictable as the one we are now approaching. Espinoza is the owl who flies among falcons. Whether he's standing in the midst of a slum, a jungle or a battlefield, his idiosyncratic elegance, mischievous smile and self-effacing charm have a way of defusing threat. His bald head demands your attention to his twinkling eyes. He's a man fascinated and engaged. We whisper to each other in code. Finally a respite from the cyber technology that's been sizzling my brain and soul. We sit within quietude of fortified walls that are old New York hotel construction, when walls were walls, and telephones were usable without a Ph.D. We quietly make our plans, sensitive to the paradox that also in our hotel is President Enrique Peña Nieto of Mexico. Espinoza and I leave the room to get outside the hotel, breathe in the fall air and walk the five blocks to a Japanese restaurant, where we'll meet up with our colleague El Alto García. As we exit onto 55th Street, the sidewalk is lined with the armored SUVs that will transport the president of Mex-

D SPEAKS



THE OUTLAW

Joaquín Archivaldo Guzmán Loera, El Chapo, in a video interview he sent from an undisclosed location

ico to the General Assembly. Paradoxical indeed, as one among his detail asks if I will take a selfie with him. Flash frame: myself and a six-foot, ear-pieced Mexican security operator.

Flash frame: Why is this a paradox? It's paradoxical because today's Mexico has, in effect, two presidents. And among those two presidents, it is not Peña Nieto who Espinoza and I were planning to see as we'd spoken in whispered code upstairs. It is not he who necessitated weeks of clandestine planning. Instead, it's a man of about my age, though absent any human calculus that may provide us a sense of anchored commonality. At four years old, in '64, I was digging for imaginary treasures, unneeded, in my parents' middle-class American backyard while he was hand-drawing fantasy pesos that, if real, might be the only path for he and his family to dream beyond peasant farming. And while I was surfing the waves of Malibu at age nine, he was already working in the marijuana and poppy fields of the remote mountains of Sinaloa, Mexico. Today, he runs the biggest international drug cartel the world has ever known, exceeding even that of Pablo Escobar. He shops and ships by some estimates more than half of all the cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine and marijuana that come into the United States.

They call him El Chapo. Or "Shorty." Joaquín Archivaldo Guzmán Loera. The same El Chapo Guzman who only two months earlier had humiliated the Peña Nieto government and stunned the world with his extraordinary escape from Altiplano maximum-security prison through an impeccably engineered mile-long tunnel.

This would be the second prison escape of the world's most notorious drug lord, the first being 13 years earlier, from Pu-

ente Grande prison, where he was smuggled out under the sheets of a laundry cart. Since he joined the drug trade as a teenager, Chapo swiftly rose through the ranks, building an almost mythic reputation: First, as a cold pragmatist known to deliver a single shot to the head for any mistakes made in a shipment, and later, as he began to establish the Sinaloa cartel, as a Robin Hood-like figure who provided much-needed services in the Sinaloa mountains, funding everything from food and roads to medical relief. By the time of his second escape from federal prison, he had become a figure entrenched in Mexican folklore.

In 1989, El Chapo dug the first subterranean passage beneath the border from Tijuana to San Diego, and pioneered the use of tunnels to transport his products and to evade capture. I will discover that his already accomplished engineers had been flown to Germany last year

those beheaded, exploded, dismembered or bullet-riddled innocents, activists, courageous journalists and cartel enemies alike. I was highly aware of committed DEA and other law-enforcement officers and soldiers, both Mexican and American, who had lost their lives executing the policies of the War on Drugs. The families decimated, and institutions corrupted.

I took some comfort in a unique aspect of El Chapo's reputation among the heads of drug cartels in Mexico: that, unlike many of his counterparts who engage in gratuitous kidnapping and murder, El Chapo is a businessman first, and only resorts to violence when he deems it advantageous to himself or his business interests. It was on the strength of the Sinaloa cartel's seemingly more calculated strategies (a cartel whose famous face is El Chapo, but also includes the co-leadership of Ismael "El Mayo" Zambada) that Sinaloa had become dominant among

dicted Americans, barbarically imprisoned for the crime of their illness? Locked down in facilities where unspeakable acts of dehumanization and violence are inescapable, and murder a looming threat. Are we saying that what's systemic in our culture, and out of our direct hands and view, shares no moral equivalency to those abominations that may rival narco assassinations in Juarez? Or, is that a distinction for the passive self-righteous?

There is little dispute that the War on Drugs has failed: as many as 27,000 drug-related homicides in Mexico alone in a single year, and opiate addiction on the rise in the U.S. Working in the emergency and development field in Haiti, I have countless times been proposed theoretical solutions to that country's ailments by bureaucratic agencies unfamiliar with the culture and incongruities on the ground. Perhaps in the tunnel vision of our puritanical and prosecutorial culture that has designed the War on Drugs, we have similarly lost sight of practice, and given over our souls to theory. At an American taxpayer cost of \$25 billion per year, this war's policies have significantly served to kill our children, drain our economies, overwhelm our cops and courts, pick our pockets, crowd our prisons and punch the clock. Another day's fight is lost. And lost with it, any possible vision of reform, or recognition of the proven benefits in so many other countries achieved through the regulated legalization of recreational drugs.

Now on 50th Street, Espinoza and I enter the Japanese restaurant. El Alto sits alone in a quiet corner, beneath a slow-turning ceiling fan that circulates the scent of raw fish. He's a big man, quiet and graceful, rarely speaking above a whisper. He'd been helpful to me on many previous excursions. He's worldly, well connected and liked. Espinoza, speaking in Spanish, fills him in on our plans and itinerary. El Alto listens intently, squeezing edamame beans one at a time between his teeth. We considered this meeting our point of no return. We were either all in, or we would abandon the journey. We had weighed the risks, but I felt confident and said so. I'd offered myself to experiences beyond my control in numerous countries of war, terror, corruption and disaster. Places where what can go wrong will go wrong, had gone wrong, and yet in the end, had delivered me in one piece with a deepening situational awareness (though not a perfect science) of available cautions within the design in chaos.

It was agreed that I would go to L.A. the next day to coordinate with our principal point of contact to El Chapo. We ordered sake and indulged the kind of operating-room humor that might displace our imperfectly scientific concerns. Outside the

FOR THE JOURNEY, WE PUT OUR LIVES IN THE HANDS OF THE SINALOA CARTEL TO GET THE FIRST INTERVIEW EL CHAPO HAD EVER GRANTED.

for three months of extensive additional training necessary to deal with the low-lying water table beneath the prison. A tunnel equipped with a pipe-track-guided motorcycle with an engine modified to function in the minimally oxygenized space, allowing El Chapo to drop through a hole in his cell's shower floor, into its saddle and ride to freedom. It was *this* president of Mexico who had agreed to see us.

I take no pride in keeping secrets that may be perceived as protecting criminals, nor do I have any gloating arrogance at posing for selfies with unknowing security men. But I'm in my rhythm. Everything I say to everyone must be true. As true as it is compartmentalized. The trust that El Chapo had extended to us was not to be fucked with. This will be the first interview El Chapo had ever granted outside an interrogation room, leaving me no precedent by which to measure the hazards. I'd seen plenty of video and graphic photography of

Mexico's criminal syndicates, extending far beyond the rural northwestern state, with significant inroads to all principal border areas between the United States and Mexico – Juarez, Mexicali, Tijuana, and reaching as far as Los Cabos.

AS AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, I'M drawn to explore what may be inconsistent with the portrayals our government and media brand upon their declared enemies. Not since Osama bin Laden has the pursuit of a fugitive so occupied the public imagination. But unlike bin Laden, who had posed the ludicrous premise that a country's entire population is defined by – and therefore complicit in – its leadership's policies, with the world's most wanted drug lord, are we, the American public, not indeed complicit in what we demonize? We are the consumers, and as such, we are complicit in every murder, and in every corruption of an institution's ability to protect the quality of life for citizens of Mexico and the United States that comes as a result of our insatiable appetite for illicit narcotics.

As much as anything, it's a question of relative morality. What of the tens of thousands of sick and suffering chemically ad-

Actor, writer and director SEAN PENN has written from the front lines in Haiti, Iraq, Iran, Venezuela and Cuba. He wishes to dedicate this article to the parents of slain Chicago youth, and to Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, public servant, father and hero.



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CHAPOTIPS@usdoj.gov

THE FALL OF THE KINGPIN

(1) El Chapo was arrested on January 8th after a gunfight with the military in Sinaloa. (2) For the past two decades, he has led the most influential and profitable drug syndicate in the world. (3) For months, he had been one of the DEA's top targets.

restaurant windows, a chanting march of Mexican-Americans flowed by in protest against the Peña Nieto government's asserted violations of human rights, having allowed their country of origin to fall prey to a narco regime.

In January 2012, the Mexican film and television star Kate del Castillo, who famously played a drug lordess in Mexico's popular soap opera *La Reina del Sur*, used Twitter to express her mistrust of the Mexican government. She stated that in a question of trust between governments and cartels, hers would go to El Chapo. And in that tweet, she expressed a dream, perhaps an encouragement to El Chapo himself: "Mr. Chapo, wouldn't it be cool that you started trafficking with love? With cures for diseases, with food for the homeless children, with alcohol for the retirement homes that don't let the elderly spend the rest of the days doing whatever the fuck they want. Imagine trafficking with corrupt politicians instead of women and children who end up as slaves. Why don't you burn all those warehouses where women are worth less than a pack of cigarettes. Without offer, there's no demand. Come on, Don! You would be the hero of heroes. Let's traffic with love. You know how to. Life is a business and the only thing that

changes is the merchandise. Don't you agree?" While she was ostracized by many, Kate's sentiment is widely shared in Mexico. It can be heard in the narco corrido ballads so popular throughout the country. But her views, unlike those folkloric lionizations, are rather a continuity of her history of brave expression and optimistic dreams for her homeland. She had been outspoken on politics, sex and religion and is among the courageous independent spirits that democracies are built to protect and cannot exist without.

Her courage is further demonstrated in her willingness to be named in this article. There are both brutal and corrupt forces within the Mexican government who oppose her (and indeed, according to Kate, high-ranking officials have responded to her public statement with private intimidations), and hence, a responsibility of the greater public to shepherd those who make their voices heard.

It perhaps should have come as no surprise that this homegrown icon of entertainment would catch the interest of a singular fan and fugitive from Sinaloa. After reading Kate's statement on Twitter, a lawyer representing El Chapo Guzmán contacted Kate. He said El Señor wanted to send her flowers in gratitude. She ner-

vously offered her address, but with the gypsy movements of an actress, the flowers did not find her.

Two years later, in February 2014, a detachment of Mexican marines captured El Chapo in a Mazatlán hotel following a 13-year manhunt. The images of that arrest were flashed across the world's televisions. While he was incarcerated at Altiplano prison, El Chapo's attorneys were flooded with overtures from Hollywood studios. With his dramatic capture, and, perhaps, the illusion of safe dealings now that El Chapo was locked up, the gringos were scrambling to tell his story. The seed was planted, and El Chapo, awakened to the prospect, made plans of his own. He was interested in seeing the story of his life told on film, but would entrust its telling only to Kate. The same lawyer again tracked her down, this time through the Mexican equivalent of the Screen Actors Guild, and the imprisoned drug lord and the actress began to correspond in handwritten letters and BBM messages.

It was at a social event in Los Angeles when Kate met Espinoza. She learned he was well connected to financial sources, including those that funded film projects, and she proposed a partnership to make a film about El Chapo. This was when Espi-

noza included our mutual colleague and friend El Alto. I learned of their intention to make the film, but I did not know Kate or have any involvement with the project. The three of them met with El Chapo's lawyer to explore their approach, but it was ultimately determined that direct access to El Chapo would still be too restricted for their authorized pursuit to rise above competitive "Chapo" projects that Hollywood would pursue with or without his participation.

Then came July 2015. El Chapo's prison break. The world, and particularly Mexico and the United States, was up in arms. How could this happen?! The DEA and the Justice Department were furious. The fact that Mexican Interior Secretary Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong had refused El Chapo's extradition to the United States, then allowed his escape, positioned Chong and the Peña Nieto administration as global pariahs.

I followed the news of El Chapo's escape and reached out to Espinoza. We met in the courtyard of a boutique hotel in Paris in late August. He told me about Kate and that she had been intermittently receiving contact from Chapo even after the escape. It was then that I posed the idea of a magazine story. Espinoza's smile of mischief arose, indicating he would arrange for me to meet Kate back in Los Angeles. At a Santa Monica restaurant, I made my case, and Kate agreed to make the bridge, sending our names for vetting across the border. When word came back a week or so later that Chapo had indeed agreed to meet with us, I called Jann Wenner at ROLLING STONE. Myself, Espinoza and El Alto were given the assignment. And with a letter from Jann officiating it, we would join Kate, who was our ticket to El Chapo's trust, then put ourselves in the hands of representatives of the Sinaloa cartel to coordinate our journey. It had been a month in the planning by the time Espinoza and I were breathing the New York air that late-September day on 55th Street.

FOUR DAYS LATER, ON OCTOBER 2nd, El Alto, Espinoza, Kate and I board a self-financed charter flight from a Los Angeles-area airport to a city in mid-Mexico. Upon landing, a hotel driver takes us by minivan to the hotel we had been instructed to book. Suspicious of every living or inanimate thing, I scan cars and drivers, mothers papoozing infants, grandmothers, peasants on the street, building tops, curtained windows. I search the skies for helicopters. There is no question in my mind but that the DEA and the Mexican government are tracking our movements. From the moment Kate had gone out on a limb with her tweet of January 2012 through the begin-



THE SINALOA CONNECTION

Chapo's massive drug production includes (1) the cultivation of poppy and marijuana. (2) Since October, the military set up numerous checkpoints to try to catch the elusive kingpin. (3) El Chapo's mother still lives on a ranch in La Tuna.



ning of our encrypted negotiations to meet El Chapo, I had been bewildered by his willingness to risk our visit. If Kate was being surveilled, so must those named on any shared flight manifest. I see no spying eyes, but I assume they are there.

Through the windshield as we approach the hotel, I see a casually dressed man in his forties appear on the sidewalk, simultaneously directing our driver to the entryway while dialing a number on his cellphone. This is Alonzo, who, I'm about to

learn, is an associate of El Chapo. We grab our bags and exit the minivan. Almost immediately, the traffic around the designated pickup point diminishes. Out of my view, someone is blocking the neighboring streets. Then, a lone convoy of "up-armor" SUVs appears in front of our hotel. Alonzo asks us to surrender our electronics and leave them behind – cellphones, computers, etc. I had left mine in Los Angeles, anticipating this requirement. My colleagues surrender theirs to the hotel desk.

FROM TOP: PEDRO PARDO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; GUILLERMO G. MONTENEGRO/NOTIMEX/NEWS.COM; DANIEL BECERRIL/REUTERS/LANDOV

We are whisked into the vehicles. Alonzo rides shotgun, my colleagues and I in the back. Alonzo and the driver are speaking quick and quiet Spanish. My own Spanish is weak at best. By day, and put on the spot, I'm pretty restricted to *hola* and *adios*. By night, with perhaps a few beers, I can get by, speaking and listening slowly. The conversation in the front seat seems unthreatening, just a cooperative exchange of logistics in the facilitation of our journey. Throughout the hour-and-a-half drive away from the city and across farmlands, both men receive frequent BBM messages – perhaps updates on our route to keep our convoy safe. With each message received, the needle on the speedometer rises; we are cruising at well over 100 miles per hour. I like speed. But not without my own hands on the wheel. To calm myself, I pretend I have any reason to memorize the route of our journey. It's that upon which I concentrate, and not the exchanges between the two strangers leading our pursuit.

We arrive at a dirt airfield. Security men in tailored suits stand beside two six-seat single-engine prop planes. It isn't until boarding one of the two planes that I realize that our driver had been the 29-year-old son of El Chapo, Alfredo Guzmán. He boards beside me, designated among our personal escorts to see his father. He's handsome, lean and smartly dressed, with a wristwatch that might be of more value than the money housed by the central banks of most nation-states. He's got one hell of a wristwatch.

The planes take off, and we travel a couple of hours. Two bouncing birds side by side through the thermals over the mountainous jungle. It once again occurs to me all the risks that are being taken by El Chapo in receiving us. We had not been blindfolded, and any experienced traveler might have been able to collect a series of triangulated landmarks to re-navigate the journey. But through his faith in Kate, whom he'd only ever known through letters or BBM, are we enjoying an unusual trust. I ask Alfredo how he can be sure we are not being followed or surveilled. He smiles (I note he doesn't blink much) and points out a red scrambler switch below the cockpit controls. "That switch blocks ground radar," he says. He adds that they have an inside man who provides notification when the military's high-altitude surveillance plane has been deployed. He has great confidence that there are no unwanted eyes on us. With Kate helping along in translations, we chat throughout the flight. I'm mindful not to say anything that may alienate his father's welcome before we've even arrived.

It's been about two hours of flight, when we descend from above the lush peaks to-

ward a sea-level field. The pilot, using his encrypted cellphone, talks to the ground. I sense that the military is beefing up operations in its search area. Our original landing zone has suddenly been deemed insecure. After quite a bit of chatter from ground to air, and some unnervingly low-altitude circling, we find an alternate dirt patch where two SUVs wait in the shade of an adjacent tree line, and land. The flight had been just bumpy enough that each of us had taken a few swigs off a bottle of Honor tequila, a new brand that Kate is marketing. I step from plane to earth, ever so slightly sobering my bearings, and move toward the beckoning waves of waiting drivers. I throw my satchel into the open back of one of the SUVs, and lumber over to the tree line to take a piss. Dick in hand, I do consider it among my body parts vulnerable to the knives of irrational narco types, and take a fond last look, before tucking it back into my pants.

institution. Did this mean we were nearing the man?

It was still several hours into the jungle before any sign we were getting closer. Then, strangers appear as if from nowhere, onto the dirt track, checking in with our drivers and exchanging hand radios. We move on. Small villages materialize from the jungle; protective peasant eyes relax at the wave of a familiar driver. Cellphones are of no use here, so I imagine there are radio repeaters on topographical high points facilitating their internal communications.

We'd left Los Angeles at 7 a.m. By 9 p.m. on the dash clock we arrive at a clearing where several SUVs are parked. A small crew of men hover. On a knoll above, I see a few weathered bungalows. I get out of the truck, search the faces of the crew for approval that I may walk to the trunk to secure my bag. Nods follow. I move. And, when I do...there he is. Right beside the

AND THERE HE IS, EL CHAPO, THE FUGITIVE DRUG LORD, APPEARING REMARKABLY WELL-GROOMED AND HEALTHY FOR A MAN ON THE RUN.

Espinoza had recently undergone back surgery. He stretched, readjusted his surgical corset, exposing it. It dawns on me that one of our greeters might mistake the corset for a device that contains a wire, a chip, a tracker. With all their eyes on him, Espinoza methodically adjusts the Velcro toward his belly, slowly looks up, sharing his trademark smile with the suspicious eyes around him. Then, "*Cirugía de espalda* [back surgery]," he says. Situation defused.

We embark into the dense, mountainous jungle in a two-truck convoy, crossing through river after river for seven long hours. Espinoza and El Alto, with a driver in the front vehicle, myself and Kate with Alonzo and Alfredo in the rear. At times the jungle opens up to farmland, then closes again into forest. As the elevation begins to climb, road signage announces approaching townships. And then, as it seems we are at the entrance of Oz, the highest peak visibly within reach, we arrive at a military checkpoint. Two uniformed government soldiers, weapons at the ready, approach our vehicle. Alfredo lowers his passenger window; the soldiers back away, looking embarrassed, and wave us through. Wow. So it is, the power of a Guzman face. And the corruption of an

truck. The world's most famous fugitive: El Chapo. My mind is an instant flip book to the hundreds of pictures and news reports I had scoured. There is no doubt this is the real deal. He's wearing a casual patterned silk shirt, pressed black jeans, and he appears remarkably well-groomed and healthy for a man on the run. He opens Kate's door and greets her like a daughter returning from college. It seems important to him to express the warm affection in person that, until now, he'd only had occasion to communicate from afar. After greeting her, he turns to me with a hospitable smile, putting out his outstretched hand. I take it. He pulls me into a "compadre" hug, looks me in the eyes and speaks a lengthy greeting in Spanish too fast for my ears. I gather up the presence of mind to explain to him in broken Spanish that I would depend on Kate to translate as the night went on. Only then does he realize his greeting had not been understood. He jokes to his crew, laughing at his own assumption that I speak Spanish and at my momentary disorientation that I've let him go on at such length in his greeting.

We are brought up some steps to a flat area on the knoll beside the bungalows. A local family caters a buffet of tacos, enchiladas, chicken, rice, beans, fresh salsa



and...carne asada. "Carne Asada," an oft-used cartel term describing the decimated bodies in cities like Juarez after mass narco executions. Hence, I go for the tacos. He walks us to a picnic table; we are offered drinks. We sit in the low illumination of some string lights, but the perimeter falls into abrupt darkness. I see no more than 30 or 35 people. (El Chapo later confided to El Alto that, out of sight, another hundred of his soldiers were present in the immediate area.) There are no long-barrel weapons in sight. No Danny Trejo types. My impression of his crew is more in sync with what one would imagine of students at a Mexico City university. Clean-cut, well-dressed and mannered. Not a smoker in the bunch. Only two or three of the guys wear small shoulder bags that hang low beside their waists, where I assume small arms are carried. Our host, it seems to me, is concerned that Kate, as the lone female among us, not face intimidating visions of force. This assumption would be borne out several hours later.

As we sit at the picnic table, introductions are made. To my left, Alonzo. Alonzo is, as it turns out, one among El Chapo's lawyers. When speaking of El Chapo's lawyers, it gets a little murky. During his imprisonment, the only visits allowed were with "lawyers." Evidently, some who would be more accurately described as lieutenants had been dubbed or perhaps certified by the expedition of power as part of his legal team. Alonzo visited El Chapo at Altiplano just two hours before his audacious escape. According to Alonzo, he was



A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

In the past decade, more than 60,000 people have died in the drug-related carnage that has swept across Mexico, including in Chapo's home state. Above: An execution in Culiacán, Sinaloa. Left: Police and loved ones discover 12 bodies in El Chaco, Sinaloa.

unaware of the escape plan. But he notes that did not spare him a brutal beating by interrogators afterward.

To my right, Rodrigo. Rodrigo is godfather to Chapo's twin four-year-old girls by his 26-year-old beauty-queen wife, Emma Coronel. Rodrigo is the one who has me concerned. The look in his eye is far away, but locked dead on me. My speculation goes audio. I hear chain saws. I feel splatter. *I am Sean's dubitable paranoia.* My eyes are compelled to drift to Rodrigo's right. There is Ivan, Chapo's eldest son. At 32, he is considered the heir to the Sinaloa cartel. He's attentive with a calm maturity. Like his brother, he boasts a fabulous wristwatch. And directly across from me, our host, with Kate to his right. Beside Alonzo, Alfredo. El Alto sits at the end of the table. Espinoza, still standing, apologizes to Chapo and asks if he may lay down for an hour to rest his

back. Espinoza's funny this way. It's as if we had spent these endless grueling hours hiking a vertical volcanic summit to the cone, and now, just three steps from viewing the ring fault of the caldera, he says, "I'm gonna take a nap. I'll look into the hole later."

With Kate translating, I begin to explain my intentions. I felt increasingly that I had arrived as a curiosity to him. The lone gringo among my colleagues, who'd ridden on the coattails of El Chapo's faith in Kate. I felt his amusement as I put my cards on the table. He asks about my relationship with the late Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez with what seems to be a probing of my willingness to be vilified through associations.

I speak to our friendship in a way that seems to pass an intuitive litmus test measuring the independence of my perspective. I tell him, up front, that I had

HOW THE CARTELS CARVE UP MEXICO

El Chapo runs the most powerful cartel in Mexico, exporting half of the U.S.'s drugs, but he has many rivals battling for supply routes and border crossings.



a family member who worked with the Drug Enforcement Agency, that through my work in Haiti (I'm CEO of J/P HRO, a nongovernmental organization based in Port-au-Prince) I had many relationships inside the United States government. I assure him that those relationships were by no means related to my interest in him. My only interest was to ask questions and deliver his responses, to be weighed by readers, whether in balance or contempt.

I tell him that I understood that in the mainstream narrative of narcos, the un-

dersung hypocrisy is in the complicity of buyers. I could not sell him on a bait-and-switch, and I knew that in the writing of any piece, my only genuine cards to play were to expose myself as one fascinated and willing to suspend judgment. I understood that whatever else might be said of him, it was clear to me he was not a tourist in our big world.

Throughout my introduction, Chapo smiles a warm smile. In fact, in what would be a seven-hour sit-down, I saw him without that smile only in brief flashes. As has been said of many notorious men, he

has an indisputable charisma. When I ask about his dynamic with the Mexican government, he pauses. "Talking about politicians, I keep my opinion to myself. They go do their thing and I do mine."

Beneath his smile, there is a doubtlessness to his facial expression. A question comes to mind as I observe his face. Both as he speaks as while he listens. What is it that removes all doubt from a man's eyes? Is it power? Admirable clarity? Or soullessness? Soullessness... wasn't it that that my moral conditioning was obliged to recognize in him? Wasn't it soullessness that I must perceive in him for myself to be perceived here as other than a Pollyanna? An apologist? I tried hard, folks. I really did. And reminded myself over and over of the incredible life loss, the devastation existing in all corners of the narco world. "I don't want to be portrayed as a nun," El Chapo says. Though this portrayal had not occurred to me. This simple man from a simple place, surrounded by the simple affections of his sons to their father, and his toward them, does not initially strike me as the big bad wolf of lore. His presence conjures questions of cultural complexity and context, of survivalists and capitalists, farmers and technocrats, clever entrepreneurs of every ilk, some say silver, and others lead.

A server delivers a bottle of tequila. El Chapo pours each of us three fingers. In toast, he looks to Kate. "I don't usually drink," he says, "but I want to drink with you." After a raise of the glass, I take a polite sip. He asks me if many people in the United States know about him. "Oh, yeah," I say, and inform him that the night before leaving for Mexico, I had seen that the Fusion Channel was repeating its special-edition *Chasing El Chapo*. He seems to delight in the absurdity of this, and as he and his cohorts share a chuckle, I look to the sky and wonder how funny it would be if there were a weaponized drone above us. We are in a clearing, sitting right out in the open. I down the tequila, and the drone goes away.

I give in to the sense of security offered by the calm of Chapo and his men. There is the pervasive feeling that if there were a threat, they would know it. We eat, drink, and talk for hours. He is interested in the movie business and how it works. He's unimpressed with its financial yield. The P&L high side doesn't add up to the downside risk for him. He suggests to us that we consider switching our career paths to the oil business. He says he would aspire to the energy sector, but that his funds, being illicit, restrict his investment opportunities. He cites (but asks me not to name in print) a host of corrupt major corporations, both within Mexico and abroad. He notes with delighted disdain several

through which his money has been laundered, and who take their own cynical slice of the narco pie.

"How much money will you make writing this article?" he asks. I answer that when I do journalism, I take no payment. I could see that, to him, the idea of doing any kind of work without payment is a fool's game. Unlike the gangsters we're used to, the John Gotti's who claimed to be simple businessmen hiding behind numerous international front companies, El Chapo sticks to an illicit game, proudly volunteering, "I supply more heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine and marijuana than anybody else in the world. I have a fleet of submarines, airplanes, trucks and boats."

He is entirely unapologetic. Against the challenges of doing business in such a clandestine industry he has --built an empire. I am reminded of press accounts alleging a hundred-million-dollar bounty the man across from me is said to have put on Donald Trump's life. I mention Trump,

which is the most difficult?" Smiling, he shakes his head and says an unequivocal "None." There is no politician who could answer the same question so clearly or successfully, but then again, the challenges are quite different for a global power broker who simply removes any obstacle to "difficulties."

Having explained my intention, I ask if he would grant two days for a formal interview. My colleagues would be leaving in the morning but I offer to stay behind to record our conversations. He pauses before responding. He says, "I just met you. I will do it in eight days. Can you come back in eight days?" I say I can. I ask to take a photograph together so that I could verify to my editors at ROLLING STONE that the planned meeting had taken place. "*Adelante*," he says. We all rise from the table as a group and follow Chapo into one of the bungalows. Once inside, we see the first sign of heavy arms. An M16 lies on a couch opposite the neutral white wall against which we would take the photograph. I

renal rush of paranoia can inspire insult or injury, Chapo has returned.

But there is a change. With Kate tucked cozily into bed, his crew and he are fast and furious into body armor, strapping long-barrel weapons and hip-clipped grenades. The battle-ready army of jungle guerrillas who had been standing down earlier in the night on her behalf are now returning to what I assume is a more typical posture. El Chapo, too, is strapped and ready to command.

Following this Clark Kent-into-Superman extravaganza, Chapo returns to the table. His demeanor, casual. His battle gear, anything but. Espinoza and El Alto share translation duties. We compare notes on cultures. We ask lighthearted questions, though the environment has gotten far less lighthearted. Despite that, I'm feeling frustrated at having to wait eight days to get him in a corner -- to ask everything I think the world wants to know. I feel naked without pen and paper. So I only ask questions one couldn't forget the answers to. Did you know Pablo Escobar? Chapo answers, "Yes, I met him once at his house. Big house." He smiles. See your mother much? "All the time. I hoped we would meet at my ranch and you could meet my mother. She knows me better than I do. But something came up and we had to change the plan." I assume he was insinuating inside information that the ranch had again come under observation by authorities.

It has been several hours, and El Alto and I share a nod indicating our mutual sense: the core of soldiers around El Chapo are getting fidgety. A clock of some kind is ticking in them. It must have been about four a.m. by this time. El Chapo stands, concluding the night, thanking us for our visit. We follow him to where the family who had cooked our dinner stands dutifully behind a serving table. He takes each of them by the hand graciously; giving them thanks, and with a look, he invites us to do the same. He walks us back toward the same bungalow where he had earlier escorted Kate. In a narrow, dark passage between ours and an adjacent bungalow, Chapo puts his arm over my shoulder and renews his request that I see him in eight days. "I'll be saying goodbye now," he says. At this moment, I expel a minor traveler's flatulence (sorry), and with it, I experience the same chivalry he'd offered when putting Kate to bed, as he pretends not to notice. We escape its subtle brume, and I join my colleagues inside the bungalow. There are two beds and one couch a short distance from where Kate can be seen sleeping on a third bed behind a privacy divider. Espinoza returns to the bed he'd claimed upon our arrival.

Now it is down to El Alto and I looking at each other. His six-foot-three frame

"I SUPPLY MORE METHAMPHETAMINE, HEROIN, COCAINE AND MARIJUANA THAN ANYBODY ELSE IN THE WORLD," EL CHAPO PROUDLY VOLUNTEERS.

El Chapo smiles, ironically saying, "Ah! Mi amigo!" His unguarded will to speak freely, his comfort with his station in life and ownership of extraordinary justifications, conjure Tony Montana in Oliver Stone's *Scarface*. It's the dinner scene where Elvira, played by Michelle Pfeiffer, walks out on Al Pacino's Tony Montana, loudly assailing him in a public place. The patrons at the restaurant stare at him, but rather than hide in humiliation, he stands and lectures them. "You're all a bunch of fucking assholes. You know why? You don't have the guts to be what you wanna be. You need people like me. You need people like me. So you can point your fucking fingers and say, 'That's the bad guy.' So what's that make you? Good? You're not good. You just know how to hide... how to lie. Me? I don't have that problem. Me?! I always tell the truth even when I lie. So say good night to the bad guy. C'mon. Last time you're gonna see a bad guy like this again, lemme tell ya!"

I'm curious, in the current pandemonium of the Middle East, what impact those frenzied opiate economies may have on his business. I ask him, "Of all the countries and cultures with whom you do business,

explain that, for authentication purposes, it would be best if we are shaking hands, looking into the camera, but not smiling. He obliges. The picture is taken on Alfredo's cellphone. It would be sent to me at a later date.

When we return to the picnic table, it seems to me that we accomplished what we came to do. We had come to agreement that he would submit to a two-day interview upon my return. As thoughts of surveillance drones and military raids come back into my head, I re-engage the tequila and scan 360 degrees for where I and my colleagues may lay flat and find cover should we have been followed and a raid initiated. In the darkness, it was difficult to imagine a safe place, and El Chapo's world is anything but.

As Espinoza returns from his slumber, Kate, succumbing to the exhausting day's journey and the solace of a few tequilas, accepts the escort of El Chapo to her sleeping quarters. As he walks her alone toward the dimly lit bungalow, I can't help but have a primal moment of concern. I consider offering to accompany them, though the circumstances would certainly prove any protective action futile. Before my ad-



THE GREAT ESCAPE

El Chapo's flight from the Antiplano prison has added to his mythic stature.

(1) In his cell right before ducking into a hole. (2) He rode to freedom through a passage to an exit (3) one mile away.



towers above me, knowing he is inadvertently caught with proximity to the five-foot-three couch, and that I, at five feet nine, am left standing only inches from a king-size bed. It's a Mexican standoff. We'd both traveled hard that day, both slightly medicated by tequila through the night. I only know that if I was going to take the short couch, it would be at gunpoint. I negotiate. "Listen, man. You don't have to sleep on that couch. The bed's big. We can talk and cuddle." With this prospect, I win the negotiation. In his grace and discretion, El Alto makes his choice: "I'll go with the couch." As I collapse onto the bed, I hear El Chapo's convoy drive away into the night jungle.

NOT TWO HOURS LATER, WE ARE abruptly awakened by Alonzo. "A storm is coming!" he says. "We have to move!" The dirt tracks of the jungle are difficult to navigate when monsoon rains saturate them. We'd have to beat the rain to the tarmac road. At daybreak, we just make it to pavement as the ocean falls from the sky and great bolts of lightning illuminate the inside of our vehicle like flash-bang grenades. Alonzo asks Kate to drive. She jumps at the chance to break the monotony, and takes the wheel like a trouper. Meanwhile, El Alto hops into the open flatbed, his sleep-starved brain so hungry for oxygen that he's oblivious to the pouring rain. In the backseat, Alonzo

whispers to me that there are multiple military checkpoints along these roads, and they tend to wave by vehicles driven by women. In this case, the rain falls hard enough that soldiers have abandoned their posts for cover. Mercifully, we are stopped by no one. Rather than risk being vaporized in a small aircraft by a lightning storm, we opted for the eight-hour drive back to the city where we'd started. Espinoza reclines in the passenger seat to rest his back.

By the time we hit the city, the weather has cleared. We shower in the rooms we'd booked. Twenty minutes later, Kate, Espinoza and I, along with Alonzo, get into two taxicabs and head to the airport. El Alto, who'd spent his two hours' sleep the

night before on a firm couch a full foot shorter than he, then waterlogged himself in the flatbed, elects to stay behind in the comfort of the hotel bed for the night and leave the following day. Alonzo heads to Mexico City. Espinoza to Europe. So Kate and I board the charter back to Los Angeles. Our heads are spinning. Had we really just been where we were? With whom we'd been? It seemed such a strange dream. Somehow, with all the planning and the travel, I still hadn't believed that we'd actually gotten to El Chapo. I'd imagined us arriving to a gentle apology, that for some unexplained security reason the visit could not take place, and we'd be going home to Los Angeles empty-handed. But that's not what happened.

When we land back on home turf, Kate and I part ways. I am picked up by a car service. In the backseat, my L.A.-based assistant had left a manila envelope with my cellphone in it. I turn on the phone to the explosion of a two-day backlog of e-mails and text messages. Ignoring them, I hit my browser for updates. What I didn't know, and what was not yet being reported, was that from the time the weather cleared, a military siege on Sinaloa was imminent. Evidently, El Chapo and his men, after leaving us the night before, had skirted through the jungle back to a ranch property. According to media reports that didn't come until days later, a cellphone among his crew had been tracked. From the time the military and the DEA moved in on them, the reports of what happened are conflicted. A source familiar with the cartel informed me on October 3rd that the initial siege had begun. That source and another on the ground in Sinaloa reported that over the next several days, two military helicopters were shot down and Mexican marine ground troops laid siege to several ranch properties. There were additional reports that 13 Sinaloa communities had been ravaged with gunfire during simultaneous raids. La Comision Nacional de los Derechos Humanos (the National Commission for Human Rights) struggled to enter the area but were prohibited. Villagers protested their treatment by the military. By the time news agencies broadcast the story in the United States, the mayhem throughout Sinaloa in those days had been essentially reduced to a nearly successful raid that had surgically targeted only Chapo and his men, and claimed he had been injured in flight with face and leg wounds.

El Chapo's own account would later be shared with me, through a BBM exchange he had with Kate. "On October 6th, there was an operation.... Two helicopters and 6 BlackHawks began a con-

frontation upon their arrival. The marines dispersed throughout the farms. The families had to escape and abandon their homes with the fear of being killed. We still don't know how many dead in total." When asked about the reports of his own injuries, Chapo responded, "Not like they said. I only hurt my leg a little bit."

Four days later, I fly from Los Angeles to Lima, Peru, to participate in a World Bank panel discussion. After a few days in Lima, and an overnight in Managua, Nicaragua, to visit an old friend, it's October 11th – the day El Chapo and I had agreed to meet. Understandably, he and his crew had gone dark during the raids. Nonetheless, I board an available flight to a nearby Mexican city, and leave a message for Alonzo that I would wait in that Mexican airport for several hours, to make sure they



THE MOVIE STAR

Kate del Castillo, one of the most famous actors in Mexico, brokered the meeting.

know that I had honored my commitment to return on the eighth day. I land in the late afternoon, then sit around the airport until the evening hours, hoping a stranger will tap me on the shoulder and tell me he is a friend of Alonzo's and that I should leave with him. It also occurs to me, once again, that I might be under the eyes of Mexican intelligence or the DEA. In either case, no contact is made. So I board a flight later that evening on my own, and return to Los Angeles.

In the weeks that follow, I continue to make attempts to contact El Chapo. In that time, massive sweeps by military and law enforcement lead to hundreds of arrests, seizures and several extraditions of cartel personnel to the United States. Reports that a rising drug gang, the CJNG (Jalisco New Generation Cartel), may have been involved with El Chapo's prison escape and that CJNG may become, in effect, the paramilitary wing of the Sinaloa cartel, have added to governmental concerns. In other words, with the water boil-

ing, our cartel intermediaries had gone principally off radar, or possibly been arrested, or killed.

Finally, Kate is able to re-establish contact through a web of BBM devices. But the heat of enforcement and surveillance had become extreme. I even received a credible tip that the DEA had indeed become aware of our journey to Mexico. Booking any flight to Mexico now would surely raise red flags. I make a plan to hide myself in the trunk of a friend's car and be driven to a waiting rental vehicle. I would then drive the rental from L.A. to Yuma, Arizona, then cross the border at Algodones. I'm familiar with this crossing – papers are not checked, and vehicles are waved through without scrutiny. I'd then drive the 80-some-odd miles from the border to the Grande Desierto, and the village of El Golfo de Santa Clara, rendezvousing with a cartel plane that could take me to El Chapo. But Kate is insistent that if I am to make that journey, she would have to come with me. The route is relatively safe, but there are some narco-controlled areas, including a few that are not friendly to the Sinaloa cartel. There were also two military checkpoints the last time I had driven that route. The idea of a gringo driving with a Mexican film star would likely draw too much attention, but Kate would have it no other way. It becomes apparent that the risks outweigh the benefits on all sides, and we decide that, instead, I will send

my questions to El Chapo by BBM. He agrees that he will record his responses on videotape. Without being present, I could neither control the questioning nor prod for elaborations to his responses. In addition, every question sent

first had to be translated into Spanish. Remarkably, while Chapo has access to hundreds of soldiers and associates at all times, apparently not one speaks English.

At the end of each day that passed without receipt of the video, Kate would reassure me that it was only one more day away. But each night, El Chapo contacted her with more delays and apparent doubts. Not about my inquiries, but seemingly about how to make a tape of himself. "Kate, let me get this straight. The guy runs a multibillion-dollar business with a network of at least 50 countries, and there's not one fucker down there in the jungle with him who speaks a word of friggin' English? Now tonight, you're telling me his BBM went on the blink, that he's got hardly any access to a goddamn computer?! Are you saying he doesn't have the technical capability to make a self-video and smuggle it into the United States?"

I ask myself, *How in the fuck does anyone run a business that way?!* I go Full-Trump-Gringo on Kate, battering her daily by phone, text and encrypted e-mail. In the end, the delay had nothing to do with technical incompetence. Big surprise. Whatever villainy is attributable to this man, and his indisputable street genius, he is also a humble, rural Mexican, whose perception of his place in the world offers a window into an extraordinary riddle of cultural disparity. It became evident that the peasant-farmer-turned-billionaire-drug-lord seemed to be overwhelmed and somewhat bewildered at the notion that he may be of interest to the world beyond the mountains. And the day-after-day delays might reveal an insecurity in him, like an awkward teenager bashful to go unguided before the camera. Or had all of this been an orchestrated performance?

When those hoops had finally been jumped through, mostly by Kate but at my relentless direction, the only retaliation I was left fearing during my engagement with El Chapo Guzmán and the Sinaloa cartel was the potential wrath of a Mexican actress toward an American actor who had single-mindedly abused his friendship with her to retrieve the needed video. And then an encrypted message came from Kate: "Got it!" I nearly hit the ceiling with excitement as Kate's follow-up dinged on my phone, "...you pushy motherfucker." I'd earned that. Evidently, a courier for El Chapo had delivered her the video. Kate and I met up, I made my apologies, and she transferred the video from her device to mine. At home, I turned down the lights, sat with an English transcription provided by Kate, which began with her note: "The video runs for 17 minutes. Press play."

He sits in a turquoise-and-navy paisley long-sleeve button-down shirt and clean black slacks on a randomly placed stool. The signature mustache that he wore in our last meeting, now gone. His trademark black trucker's hat, absent. His hair combed, or perhaps cap-matted, conjuring the vision of a wide-eyed schoolboy unsure of his teacher's summons. His hands folded across each other, a self-soothing thumb crossing the knuckle of the other. Beside him, a short white brick wall topped by a chain-link fence. Behind that, a white 4x4 pickup truck. The location appears as a large, ranchlike property with low-lying mountains far in the distance and the intermittent *cockadoodledoo* of farm roosters serving as the Greek chorus to the interview. Throughout the video, we see farm workers and paramilitaries crossing behind him. A German shepherd sniffs the dirt and wanders out of frame.

THE LIFE AND CRIMES OF A DRUG LORD

Born in the Golden Triangle – the remote heart of Mexico's drug production – El Chapo has a history of outrageous escapes, horrific violence and pure profit

December 25, 1954, or April 4, 1957

Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán is born (the official date is contested) in La Tuna, Sinaloa. His father was "officially" a cattle rancher, but according to Malcolm Beith's biography, *The Last Narco*, locals say he was actually a *gomero*, or opium farmer.

Late 1970s

El Chapo begins running drugs from the Sierra to major Mexican cities and to the border. He develops a reputation for efficiency and ruthlessness.

Early 1980s



El Chapo is introduced to the Sinaloa cartel's leader, Miguel Ángel Félix Gallardo (a.k.a. El Padrino), the godfather of the modern Mexican drug trade.

1989

El Padrino's cartel is divided among the capos, making it more self-sufficient and less visible to law enforcement. El Chapo and "El Mayo" Zambada take over the operations along the Pacific Coast.

Early 1990s

El Chapo methodically builds his cartel while providing services for the poor, earning fierce loyalty in his home turf. "You are financing everything: Baptisms. Infrastructure," a former Mexican ambassador said. "You are Santa Claus. And everybody likes Santa Claus."



Early 1992

El Chapo begins to expand into Tijuana, encroaching on the Arellano Felix brothers of

the Tijuana cartel and setting off a deadly gang war.



June 1993

El Chapo flees across Mexico to Guatemala, where he's arrested and sentenced to 20 years for murder and trafficking.

January 19, 2001

El Chapo escapes from a maximum-security prison in a laundry cart. The escape costs him as much as \$2.5 million, and results in the detention of 73 prison officials.

Early 2000s

El Chapo muscles into Tijuana and Gulf cartel territory, and open warfare breaks out. "Sinaloa was very much the instigator of much of the violence in Mexico in the early parts of the 2000s," Vanda Felbab-Brown, of the Brookings Institution, said. But "they never adopted the same level of violence and carnage [as their rivals]."

2004

The escalating violence draws renewed attention from U.S. and Mexican authorities, leading to at least two almost-captures of El Chapo. The Mexican army receives a tip that he is throwing a party. Helicopters rain down on a ranch that they suspect is owned by Chapo. "Every time he gets away, they tell us, 'He got out the back door,'" said one American official. "U.S. officials have started to joke that there is no word for 'surround' in Spanish."

July 2, 2007

El Chapo throws a wedding party for himself and his fourth wife, beauty queen Emma Coronel Aispuro, on her 18th birthday. The military tries to raid the festivities, only to find the couple had left on their honeymoon.



May 8, 2008

El Chapo's son Edgar is killed in a parking-lot shootout. The murder inspires a rash of revenge killings, and beheadings become a common sight throughout Sinaloa.

2009

Cartel members begin to use unlicensed drug-rehab centers as safe houses in Ciudad Juárez. In September, men stormed a rehab clinic in the city and murdered 17 patients – one of several similar attacks rumored to be the work of the Sinaloa cartel.

February 22, 2014

After 13 years on the run, Chapo is arrested in Mazatlán. "I killed two or three thousand," Chapo told law enforcement. "I'm a drug trafficker. I don't kidnap or steal or extort or anything like that."



July 11, 2015

El Chapo escapes from a maximum-security prison through a tunnel under a shower, and was the target of a nationwide manhunt.

January 8, 2016

Chapo is captured in Los Mochis, Sinaloa.

He begins: "I want to make clear that this interview is for the exclusive use of Miss Kate del Castillo and Mister Sean Penn." The image goes black.

When it returns, so has he to the comfort of his trucker hat.

Of the many questions I'd sent El Chapo, a cameraman out of frame asks a few of them directly, paraphrases others, softens many and skips some altogether.

How was your childhood?

I remember from the time I was six until now, my parents, a very humble family, very poor, I remember how my mom made bread to support the family. I would sell it, I sold oranges, I sold soft drinks, I sold candy. My mom, she was a hard worker, she worked a lot. We grew corn, beans. I took care of my grandmother's cattle and chopped wood.

And how did you get involved in the drug business?

Well, from the time I was 15 and after, where I come from, which is the munic-

Is it true what they say that drugs destroy humanity and bring harm?

Well, it's a reality that drugs destroy. Unfortunately, as I said, where I grew up there was no other way and there still isn't a way to survive, no way to work in our economy to be able to make a living.

Do you think it is true you are responsible for the high level of drug addiction in the world?

No, that is false, because the day I don't exist, it's not going to decrease in any way at all. Drug trafficking? That's false.

Did your drug business grow and expand when you were in jail?

From what I can tell, and what I know, everything is the same. Nothing has decreased. Nothing has increased.

What about the violence attached to this type of activity?

In part, it is because already some people already grow up with problems, and there is some envy and they have informa-

more of us, and lots of different ways of thinking.

What is the outlook for the business? Do you think it will disappear? Will it grow instead?

No, it will not end because as time goes by, we are more people, and this will never end.

Do you think terrorism activities in the Middle East will, in any way, impact the future of drug trafficking?

No, sir. It doesn't make a difference at all.

You saw how the final days of Escobar were. How do you see your final days with respect to this business?

I know one day I will die. I hope it's of natural causes.

The U.S. government thinks that the Mexican government does not want to arrest you. What they want to do is to kill you. What do you think?

No, I think that if they find me, they'll arrest me, of course.

With respect to your activities, what do you think the impact on Mexico is? Do you think there is a substantial impact?

Not at all. Not at all.

Why?

Because drug trafficking does not depend on just one person. It depends on a lot of people.

What is your opinion about who is to blame here, those who sell drugs, or the people who use drugs and create a demand for them? What is the relationship between production, sale and consumption?

If there was no consumption, there would be no sales. It is true that consumption, day after day, becomes bigger and bigger. So it sells and sells.

We hear avocado is good for you, lime is good for you, guanabana is good for you. But we never hear anyone doing any publicity with respect to drugs. Have you done anything to induce the public to consume more drugs?

Not at all. That attracts attention. People, in a way, want to know how it feels or how it tastes. And then the addiction gets bigger.

Do you have any dreams? Do you dream?

Whatever is normal. But dreaming daily? No.

But you must have some dreams, some hopes for your life?

I want to live with my family the days God gives me.

If you could change the world, would you?

For me, the way things are, I'm happy.

How is your relationship with your mom?

My relationship? Perfect.

Very well. Is it one of respect?

Yes, sir, respect, affection and love.

"IF THEY FIND ME, THEY'LL ARREST ME. BUT DRUG TRAFFICKING DOES NOT DEPEND ON JUST ONE PERSON. IT DEPENDS ON A LOT OF PEOPLE."

ipality of Badiraguato, I was raised in a ranch named La Tuna, in that area, and up until today, there are no job opportunities. The only way to have money to buy food, to survive, is to grow poppy, marijuana, and at that age, I began to grow it, to cultivate it and to sell it. That is what I can tell you.

How did you leave there? How did it all expand?

From there, from my ranch, I started to leave at 18 and went to Culiacan, then after to Guadalajara, but never without visiting my ranch, even up until today, because my mom, thanks to God, is still alive, out there in our ranch, which is La Tuna, and so, that is how things have been.

How has your family life changed from then to now?

Very good – my children, my brothers, my nephews. We all get along well, very normal. Very good.

And now that you are free, how has it affected you?

Well, as for being free – happy, because freedom is really nice, and pressure, well, for me it's normal, because I've had to be careful for a few years now in certain cities, and, no, I don't feel anything that hurts my health or my mind. I feel good.

tion against someone else. That is what creates violence.

Do you consider yourself a violent person?

No, sir.

Are you prone to violence, or do you use it as a last resort?

Look, all I do is defend myself, nothing more. But do I start trouble? Never.

What is your opinion about the situation in Mexico, what is the outlook for Mexico?

Well, drug trafficking is already part of a culture that originated from the ancestors. And not only in Mexico. This is worldwide.

Do you consider your activity, your organization, a cartel?

No, sir, not at all. Because people who dedicate their lives to this activity do not depend on me.

How has this business evolved from the time you started up until today?

Big difference. Today there are lots of drugs, and back then, the only ones we knew were marijuana and poppy.

What is the difference in people now compared to back then?

Big difference, because now, day after day, villages are getting bigger, and there's



THE MEETING

The author and then-fugitive El Chapo Guzmán, on October 2nd, after a long dinner and conversation

How do you see the future for your sons and daughters?

Very well. They get along right. The family is tight.

How about your life? How has your life changed, how have you lived it since you escaped?

Lots of happiness – because of my freedom.

Did you ever use drugs?

No, sir. Many years ago, yes, I did try them. But an addict? No.

How long ago?

I haven't done any drugs in the last 20 years.

Did it not worry you that you might be putting your family at risk with your escape?

Yes, sir.

For your recent escape, did you pursue your freedom at any cost, at the expense of anybody?

I never thought of hurting anyone. All I did was ask God, and things worked out. Everything was perfect. I am here, thank God.

The two times you escaped, it is worth mentioning, there was no violence.

With me, it did not come to that. In other situations, what's been seen, things occur differently, but here, we did not use any violence.

Bearing in mind what has been written about you, what one can see on TV, things

are said about you in Mexico, what kind of message would you like to convey to the people of Mexico?

Well, I can say it's normal that people have mixed feelings because some people know me and others don't. That is the reason I say it is normal. Because those who do not know me can have their doubts about saying if, in this case, I'm a good person or not.

If I ask you to define yourself as a person, if I ask you to pretend you are not Joaquín, instead you are the person who knows him better than anybody else in the world, how would you define yourself?

Well, if I knew him – with respect, and from my point of view, it's a person who's not looking for problems in any way. In any way.

SINCE OUR LATE-NIGHT VISIT in the Mexican mountains, raids on ranches there have been relentless. A war zone. Navy helicopters waging air assaults and inserting troops. Helos shot down by Sinaloa cartel gunmen. Marines killed. Cartel fighters killed. Campasinos killed or displaced. Rumors spread that El Chapo escaped to Guatemala, or even further, into South America. But no. He was right there where he was born and raised. On Friday, Janu-

ary 8th, 2016, it happened. El Chapo was captured and arrested – alive.

I think of that night, of that calm before the storm, and the otherworldly experience of sitting with a man so seemingly serene, despite his living a reality so surreal. I had not gotten the kind of in-depth interview I'd hoped to achieve. Not challenged checkers with chess, nor vice versa. But perhaps, at least, retrieved a glimpse from the other side, and what is for me an affirmation of the dumbshow of demonization that has demanded such an extraordinary focus of assets toward the capture or killing of any one individual black hat.

Still, today, there are little boys in Sinaloa who draw play-money pesos, whose fathers and grandfathers before them harvested the only product they'd ever known to morph those play pesos into real dollars. They wonder at our outrage as we, our children, friends, neighbors, bosses, banks, brothers and sisters finance the whole damn thing. Without a paradigm shift, understanding the economics and illness of addiction, parents in Mexico and the U.S. will increasingly risk replacing that standard parting question to their teens off for a social evening – from “Where are you going tonight?” to “Where are you dying tonight?”

El Chapo? It won't be long, I'm sure, before the Sinaloa cartel's next shipment into the United States is the man himself. **2**

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Reviews

"And I don't care if I sing off-key,
I find myself in my melodies.
I sing for love, I sing for me,
I'll shout it out like a bird set free."
—SIA, "Bird Set Free"



The Wild Heart Inside the Pop Machine

On her seventh LP, Sia reclaims songs that Adele, Rihanna and others turned down



Sia

This Is Acting Monkey Puzzle/RCA

★★★

BY JON DOLAN

The past decade-plus of pop music has been dominated by behind-the-scenes songwriting maestros like Max Martin and Ryan Tedder, but only one of them – 40-year-old Australian Sia Furler – has become a solo star in her own right. Sia had a career as an electronica-leaning artist in the early 2000s, before finding her voice as a Top 40 master blaster, writing smashes for Beyoncé, Rihanna and more. She saved her most intense fire for her own breakout solo hit, 2014's "Chandelier" – a diabolically catchy depiction of alcoholism that was also so real it could scare Jim Beam off booze.

Sia's songs update the grandiose Eighties lite-rock ballad tradition of Diane Warren and Phil Collins for our moodier era of R&B-inscribed feminism, delivering lyrics about strain, perseverance and redemption over tracks that build from tensely foreboding verse

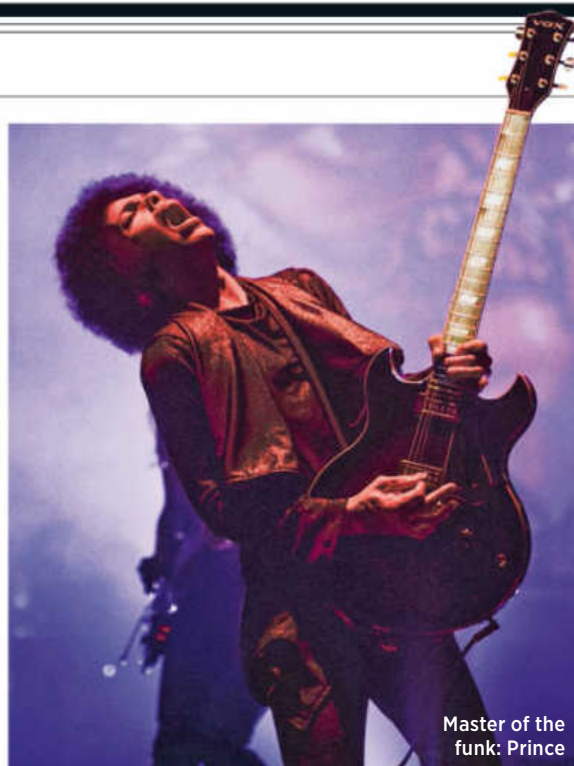
Reviews

to a titanic cathartic chorus. She's mastered the formula so well that she's made her seventh solo album a commentary on how hit songs are made. The tunes here were originally intended for – and then rejected by – major singers. It's a fascinating study in what it's like to live life imagining yourself in someone else's artistic shoes.

This Is Acting opens with two songs that Sia hoped to land on Adele's *25*. Her approximation of the phrasing and tone of the world's most beloved singer over the roiling piano on "Bird Set Free" is uncanny, while "Alive" is a throwback soul crusher that would've been the hardest-hitting thing on that blockbuster LP. Even when the match between artist and material isn't quite copacetic, the quality control is high: Rihanna might've been right to dismiss "Cheap Thrills," but the lithe party tune could've done well for a sprightlier singer like Ariana Grande. Other highlights, such as the industrial-strength anthem "Unstoppable," feel like they could've been recorded by a half-dozen artists, from Katy Perry to Miley Cyrus.

Sometimes these outtakes feel like, well, outtakes: "Footprints" is an orphan from a Beyoncé writing session with refrigerator-magnet-level lyrics (comparing a relationship's progress to "two footprints in the sand") that Bey was wise to pass on. Impressively, though, for an album that's more about utilitarian versatility than making the songs her own, Sia's personality often comes through. The high point is "One Million Bullets," the only song she wrote with herself in mind. Against a dusky minor-key piano, Sia offers herself as her lover's protector, muse and martyr – her voice cracking perfectly in the chorus as she asks if they'd take a shot for her too. If this is acting, it's the kind of performance that hits as hard as life itself. **C**

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Master of the funk: Prince

Prince Doubles Back Around for a Funky Drive-By

Slinky sex grooves, plus a tribute to Freddie Gray: Prince is back in top form

Prince *HitnRun Phase Two* NPG ★★★★★½



Prince put out two back-to-basics LPs in 2014, but ultimately he was outdone by Bruno Mars and Mark Ronson's "Uptown Funk," which rode his classic Minneapolis sound all the way to Number One. Late in 2015, he came back with another one-two punch – the second half of which is a well-timed reminder that nobody knows how to funk you up better. *HitnRun Phase One* seemed to focus on where Prince wanted to go – EDM-inflected bangers, poppy dance cuts – but *Phase Two*, with its brassy arrangements and cheeky lyrics, embodies the artist in his natural state as a soul-funk master.

It adds up to his most consistently engaging album in years. He seems like he's having fun: On "Look at Me, Look at U," Prince jokes that "even Ray Charles can see" the chemistry he has with a woman ("Stevie Wonder can too"), and deep into the elastic "Stare," he says, "Can I get a kiss?" before playing his iconic guitar scratch from "Kiss." Elsewhere, he goes all-the-way horndog. "Whenever you need someone to take a shower with, call me up," he proposes on "Xtraloveable." Hey, he told us years ago that he had a dirty mind. But it never gets in the way of his musicianship; Prince's crisp, bluesy guitar solos shine throughout (see the Freddie Gray tribute, "Baltimore"). As eclectic as he can be, *Phase Two* is what he does best.

KORY GROW



Happy Traum

Just for the Love of It Lark's Nest

★★★★★

Woodstock folkie celebrates tradition in beautiful style

At 77, folk revivalist Happy Traum has an easy, conversational singing voice that hasn't changed much, and a delicately fluid acoustic-guitar style that testifies to decades as a student and teacher. On this LP, history feels lived, not fixed: "Crash on the Levee (Down in the Flood)," which Traum cut with Bob Dylan in 1971, gets a reprise that's a bit less vindictive, which maybe ain't surprising from a dude named Happy. Still, it's the sad songs here that really connect: See "Deep Blue Sea," a song about death that's buoyed by gospel harmonies. If we've all gotta go, and we do, this seems like the right way to look at it.

WILL HERMES



Megadeth

Dystopia Tradecraft ★★★★★½

Thrash-metal gods get wicked paranoid, Trump-style

Is Dave Mustaine running for president? The Megadeth mastermind has packed the head-bangers' 15th LP with enough fear-mongering to earn him a podium at a GOP debate, as he snarls about conspiracies ("The Threat Is Real"), the decline of Western civilization ("Lying in State") and even more imaginary horrors ("Post-American World"). It's grim stuff. Luckily, the group – which this time includes virtuosic playing by Brazilian guitar shredder Kiko Loureiro and Lamb of God drummer Chris Adler – has concocted some of its most vital and menacing thrash in years, making up for their last album's decidedly un-metal banjo interlude.

KORY GROW

A Little Bit Country, and a Whole Lot Everything Else



HOOKING ONE SINGLE to backing vocals lifted from Sam Cooke, invoking Marvin Gaye on another, **Thomas Rhett** is a different kind of country star – at least different from the twang-metal cowboy he played on his debut album three years ago. Think of him as an R&B loverman, unfurling songs about getting loose on vacation or in the club – what’s the difference? “This is the groove that gives you swagger and gets you talking real smooth to a lady,” he promises on “Anthem,” the opening cut on *Tangled Up*, before making way for guitars that might as well be EDM synths. At times the corn runs too high, but the sound is unusually rhythm-forward, and it works. While these songs are specific about their sense of place, musically they’re polyglot – those mentions of Georgia and Tennessee are a pledge of fealty that allows the music to go anywhere.

That’s how **Cam** works it on *Untamed*, a major-label debut that opens with crickets, a train whistle and harmonica, then zips off



Cam

Thomas Rhett
Tangled Up ★★ ★

Cam *Untamed* ★★ ★ ½

Brothers Osborne
Pawn Shop ★★ ★ ½

into booming drums and stratospheric vocals. The expert gloss comes in part from co-producer Jeff Bhasker, who’s worked with Kanye West, Lana Del Rey and Bruno Mars. Jack the bass on standouts like “Hungover on Heartache” and “Burning House” and they’d be ready for Pink, another Bhasker client.

By comparison, **Brothers Osborne** are traditionalists – but that riff in the opening track of *Pawn Shop* sure sounds familiar. Could it really be from Elvis Costello’s “Pump It Up”? Maybe. Produced by Jay Joyce, who helped Eric Church plot his country-rock insurrection, *Pawn Shop* works an expansive version of Americana that connects Lynyrd Skynyrd to U2 and Merle Haggard to Bob Seger. Those put off by drawls and banjos will be missing out on one of the best rock records in a long while.



Rhett



Hank Williams Jr.

It’s About Time Nash Icon ★★ ★

Country vet rocks out, waves guns around, incites snoozes

At 66, country music’s cranky uncle has been running a successful cottage industry in right-leaning outlaw posturing for decades. His latest showcases an admirably hot band, with guests including Eric Church – see the fiddle-spiked take on Neil Young’s “Are You Ready for the Country?” But the party gets weird around “God and Guns,” a hard-rock NRA hand job that’s meatheaded and inflammatory. Elsewhere, attempts at pop coalition-building become wishful thinking. “If you’re singin’ along with this song, then I guess you agree,” Williams suggests on the nostalgic “Those Days Are Gone.” Not necessarily, dude.

WILL HERMES



Panic! at the Disco

Death of a Bachelor

DCD2/Fueled by Ramen ★★ ★

Emo dudes channel Sinatra (really!) with non-awful results

Ten years after getting their start as pointy-haired emoglam show ponies, Panic! at the Disco are now a vehicle for frontman Brendon Urie, who describes their fifth LP as “a mix between Sinatra and Queen.” That means a little more glitzy polish and loads of gloppy decadence (“I lost a bet to a guy in a chiffon skirt/But I make these high heels work,” Urie sings on the B-52s-sampling “Don’t Threaten Me With a Good Time”). And he’s deadly serious about the Sinatra thing – check “Impossible Year,” which brazenly imagines Ol’ Blue Eyes reborn as a pooched party-goth and pulls it off through sheer force of will.

JON DOLAN

By Peter Travers

America the Un-Beautiful

Michael Moore has a blast showing us how we're screwing up the things that once made this country great

Where to Invade Next

Michael Moore

Directed by Michael Moore

★★★

HAS MICHAEL MOORE GONE soft? You might think so, making a snap judgment of *Where to Invade Next*, a crazy-like-a-fox documentary hellbent on seeing the best in people. Other people. Not us Americans. Turns out we suck at practicing what we preach. So here's Moore, the proudly schlubby Michigan warrior, heading off to Europe to plant our flag in countries where folks know how to live. In other words, he intends to steal the good stuff and bring it home. Naive? For sure. Manipulative? You bet. Moore's detractors see him as an arrogant fat cat passing himself off as the common man to nail easy targets. Even his supporters buy the arrogant part, but find – as I do – that Moore is just the pain in the ass we need in a crisis. Moore's newfound mellow approach in *Where to Invade Next* is meant to disarm us. This is Big Mike the entertainer, not the provocateur of cinematic missiles such as *Bowling for Columbine*, *Fahrenheit 9/11* and *Sicko*. Don't believe it. No laugh in this doc – and there are plenty – goes out without a sting in its tail.

Moore sets up his film by daydreaming about a summons from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "Instead of using Marines, use me," he pleads. As we watch a collage of America at its worst – bank scandals, stock frauds, housing foreclosures, black teens murdered by cops – Moore sets out to invade the world for bright ideas.



Moore invades Europe for a better USA.

In Italy, he meets a couple who get 30 days paid vacation each year with no loss in productivity. Their bosses encourage two-hour lunches at home, where families can connect.

In France, Moore is astonished by school kids who are served nutritional food, including several kinds of cheeses (Camembert, *mais oui!*), and are horrified by the slop washed down with sugary soft drinks in America. They drink water.

In Slovenia, college is free – even for foreigners – and students go on strike if anyone even thinks about charging tuition. Take that, American students who start life burdened with staggering college loans.

In Finland, students attend school for shorter hours, are rarely given homework and still rank among the best in the world.

OK, Moore is cherry-picking the most damning evidence. And you keep wishing he'd push harder and go deeper instead of skipping off to the next thing. But he's not making

things up. And when he ventures into even more incendiary territory, the facts emerge with distressing impact.

On a visit to a Norway prison, the worst felons are treated with compassion, with sentences capped at 21 years, even for murderers. Yet the crime rate is low, as is recidivism.

In Tunisia, women win free health care from a hidebound Islamist regime. And a female activist complains that selfish, me-first Americans won't even make the first move to learn about her culture.

And get a load of Portugal, where using drugs is not a crime, but rehab is offered to those who want it. "I have cocaine in my pocket right now," Moore jokes to a cop, who couldn't care less.

A trip to Iceland finds that the bankers who brought economic ruin to their country are thrown in jail instead of being bailed out. And the saviors of society are the skilled female leaders who reject testosterone as a fuel source.

Still, it's the Germans who most inspire Moore. They don't run from their shameful backstory; they use art and public forums to remind citizens of the Holocaust. Back home, our vicious history with Native Americans and African slaves is mostly ignored, even as recent events echo the past through gun culture and racial violence.

Love him or hate his methods, Moore touches a nerve in *Where to Invade Next*. In a climactic remembrance at the Berlin Wall, he recalls a time when a corrupt regime was brought down by people willing to protest. What counted most were humanitarian principles, the same bedrock concepts that America was founded on. See, the joke's on us. The rest of the world is swiping ideas that we originated. Amid the comic chaos of this scattershot satire is a shocking reminder to Americans that discovering the path ahead may be as uncomplicated as rediscovering the way we were. It's classic Moore.

Animation Reinvented

Anomalisa

Jennifer Jason Leigh

Directed by Charlie Kaufman

★★★★

NEED PROOF THAT ANIMATION can beat live-action filmmaking at its own game? Try *Anomalisa*, an R-rated love story that's as unique as it is unforgettable. Leave it to Charlie Kaufman to follow up his audacious 2008 directorial debut, *Synecdoche, New York*, with another groundbreaker. *Anomalisa* burrows deep into the mysteries of human nature by using stop-motion puppets with faces that look like masks. Kaufman and co-director Duke Johnson work wonders, and not just because the puppets get naked and get it on. What's miraculously inventive here is the way these puppets remind us of ourselves.

A motivational speaker, Michael Stone (superbly voiced by David Thew-



A one-nighter for Thewlis and Leigh

lis), spends the night at an Ohio hotel where he will give a speech the next day. In his room, Michael visibly sags. His marriage is shit, as we hear from a phone call home. To Michael, every voice sounds the same. Hell, it literally is the same, since the invaluable Tom Noonan speaks for every character that Michael encounters on his trip.

That is, until he meets Lisa (Jennifer Jason Leigh), an exuberant sales rep whose voice cuts through the sameness. When Michael invites Lisa back to his room, she shares her own hard-luck stories, of loves lost and opportunities missed. Michael relates

to her loneliness, but admires her resilience, something he lacks. The sex is perfunctory – Lisa has body issues – but their connection is real. Leigh's voice performance is truly a work of art. And when she sings for Michael – a slowed-down, seriously heartbreaking take on Cyndi Lauper's "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" – he's a goner. You will be, too. Michael briefly believes the anomaly that is Lisa will be his salvation. Not in Kaufman country, it won't. And yet *Anomalisa* gets under your skin. Filtered through Kaufman's searching mind and soulful brilliance, the result is a masterpiece. 

A Not-So-Easy Rider

The Lady in the Van

Maggie Smith

Directed by Nicholas Hytner

★★½

MAGGIE SMITH CAN DO ANYTHING – even save this rickety vehicle from a case of the terminal cutes. Now ending her memorable run on *Downton Abbey*, Smith has picked herself another acting plum. She's playing Mary Shepherd, an unsanitary and unlovable vagrant who parked her junkheap van in a London driveway in 1973 and for 15 years refused to budge. It's a "mostly true story," according to playwright



Jennings and Smith let loose.

Alan Bennett, who owned the driveway and wrote a memoir and a play about Shepherd. Now Bennett has written the movie. Alex Jennings plays him as an eccentric who's exasperated by Shepherd's antics – she leaves her shit in plastic bags outside her van – but can't really turn the old dearie out. That's the plot. Nicholas Hytner, who directed the film versions of two better Bennett plays, *The Madness of King George* and *The History Boys*, does the honors again. But this time his job is mostly to stay out of Dame Maggie's way. Good plan. It's fun to watch her hate on bratty children, classical music and liberal pieties. Smith's acid tongue makes any line sound better. But when the tears creep in, duck. I'll take bitchery over curdled whimsy any day. I only wish the movie felt the same. 

Acting at Its Very Best

45 Years

Charlotte Rampling, Tom Courtenay

Directed by Andrew Haigh

★★★★½

WHAT MAKES A MARRIAGE last? "Who the fuck knows?" is the astute answer provided by *45 Years*, a sublimely acted, ruefully funny and quietly devastating mesmerizer from writer-director Andrew Haigh. Geoff (Tom Courtenay) and his wife, Kate (Charlotte Rampling), are a childless couple planning a party for their 45th anniversary. Then the bomb drops. The body of Katia, the love of



Courtenay and Rampling on edge

Geoff's youth, has been found perfectly preserved in a Swiss glacier where she went missing a half-century ago. Everyone struggles to maintain a very British reserve. Unsuccessfully. Courtenay and Rampling convey a lifetime

of emotions with uncommon subtlety and feeling. In her final scene, standing alone in a crowd, Rampling shows us everything a great actress can do without a hint of excess or a single wasted motion. The effect is killer. So is the movie. 

LEONARDO DICAPRIO

[Cont. from 39] is just gonna be misunderstood."

One thing is clear: He's not going to retire and chain himself to the gate of a BP plant. There has to be a strategy.

"I had a friend say, 'Well, if you're really this passionate about environmentalism, quit acting,'" he says. "But you soon realize that one hand shakes the other, and being an artist gives you a platform." He pauses and offers his palms upward. "Not that necessarily people will take anything that I say seriously, but it gives you a voice."

ONE AFTERNOON, DICAPRIO is heading in the Tesla to another appointment, and he wants to make something very clear.

"This is not my life," says DiCaprio, dressed in the same outfit as the day before to maintain continuity in the shooting. He stares intently at me. "I'm not followed around by publicists, security guards,

drivers and all that. That's not my day-to-day life - it's my professional life."

Talk moves to what he loves to do most: scuba dive in exotic locations. He's hit Australia, the Galapagos and multiple spots in the Caribbean. Even relying on the oxygen kindness of Edward Norton to survive hasn't dampened his love.

"It's a hypnotic, unbelievably beautiful ecosystem that's below the surface of the world we live in," says DiCaprio, his face relaxing noticeably. "It's a complete escape from absolutely everything."

Today is an escape of a different sort. DiCaprio is standing on a catwalk outside a giant glass tank simulating a hurricane at the University of Miami. As the waters pound a model house on a model beach, he makes a joke: "I spent a lot of time in a tank like this for *Titanic*." For 45 minutes, a scientist tells DiCaprio about the shredding Florida will take during the next hurricane. DiCaprio hits the vape pipe during a pause and exchanges a

look with Stevens that suggests, "You try to put a happy ending on this."

DiCaprio says goodbye to the crew and says he'll see them in Paris for the climate-change conference. He knows that one of the first things conservatives will throw at him is the amount of fuel used by the thousands of attendees.

"There's no way we're not all hypocrites," says DiCaprio. "We've built this. Our entire society is oil-based. Everything that you see is because of fossil fuels. The day there is a sustainable way to travel, I'll be first in line."

For DiCaprio, the trip was worth it. After the Paris Agreement was signed, he declared, "[This] gives us a shot at saving the planet. There is no time to waste. This marks the end of the fossil-fuel era."

But that's a week away. For now, he has a few hours of downtime with his art-gallery friends. On the way downtown, I mention that his intensity on global warming is, well, intense.

"You noticed that, huh?" he says. "This has got to be the largest human movement in history, and it takes every religion, every country, every individual contributing to it."

We arrive at a ritzy gallery that shows no sign of the coming apocalypse. Security guards swarm the car. I begin to say goodbye, but DiCaprio puts his hand on my arm. "Don't worry, I'm not jumping out of the car." He continues on for a couple more minutes about a new ally in the fight. "We finally have a pope for the first time that is speaking through his encyclical and has aligned himself with modern science."

Someone knocks on the window. It's time to go. DiCaprio opens the door, and the likely next winner of the Oscar for Best Actor is immediately engulfed in handlers. He turns back and shouts over his shoulder with a smile, "Nice talking to you, bro!"

For just a moment, Leonardo DiCaprio looks like a kid without a care in the world. ☺

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Lenny Kravitz

The enduring rock star (and actor) on his ultrachill lifestyle, his heroes, and advice from his grandpa

You live part-time on Eleuthera, an island in the Bahamas. What's a day like there?

Last night, my sax player caught a 15-pound snapper that we just threw on the grill. That's the quality of living here: Pick vegetables out of the garden and fish out of the sea. My big decision is: Which beach are we going to hang out on? When we get to the water, am I going to paddleboard or swim? I don't surf, and I'm not even the best swimmer, but that's part of my New Year's resolution. I made a plan a month ago: Surfing is going to change my music. It's going to offer me something I don't have that I need to move toward. Lately I've been listening to "God Only Knows" over and over.

A Brian Wilson phase wouldn't be bad! How about in your other home, in Paris?

My house there was actually built to be the U.S. Embassy. Kind of crazy. It's a four-story townhouse that I bought 10 years ago. I had been spending a lot of time in Paris, and I just wanted to get a little apartment there. And somehow I got this! In the mornings it's about going to the boulangerie and picking out your pastries. I love that whole provincial way of living: You've got your butcher and your cheese guy and wine guy, and they all know what you like. I love walking the streets, stopping in a cafe and having a little lunch and a bottle of wine and looking at people.

You may be the first-ever rock star to have his own interior-design company. Why?

Creating something out of nothing – whether it's a space or a song, it's the same thing to me. When I was a kid, I was always into how my room looked, and I'd bring in lights and posters. I had some cool strobe lights; I'd break mirrors and use the glass and make mosaics. As an adult, I'd have a place for a couple of years and redo it and find another place and sell that one and redo it again. It got ridiculous, so I decided to start a company to do it for other people.

Who are your heroes?

Bob and Mick and McCartney – it's wonderful to see how they've become like the jazz cats. I saw the Stones on the last tour, the last show of the American leg. They were as hardcore as I've ever seen them – their aggression and precision were unbelievable. I look at them and say, "That's what I want to be doing when I'm in my seventies."

Bob Dylan gave you a harmonica after you saw one of his shows in Atlanta recently. What did you do with it?

It's on the mantel in my bedroom in Paris. I see it when I wake up. I've picked it up a few times and looked at it. It has a piece of tape on it with the keys written on it. I'll play it someday. I've put special things from my life on that mantel: the plastic cast of my hand that my uncle made when I was six; a ceramic mask I made in art class when I was about seven; a Cartier watch that belonged to [cabaret singer] Bobby Short; the handwritten set list to Woodstock that Hendrix wrote right before doing the gig. I bought those years ago.

What was your favorite book as a kid?

Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. As a small kid in the schoolyard, there were all these caterpillars, and I would sit and play with them for hours. I was into the cocoons and the whole metamorphosis. It always fascinated me – that something could be one thing at one moment and change into something else completely different the next moment. It meant I didn't have to be one thing, and I don't live my life like that. I'm always looking for change.

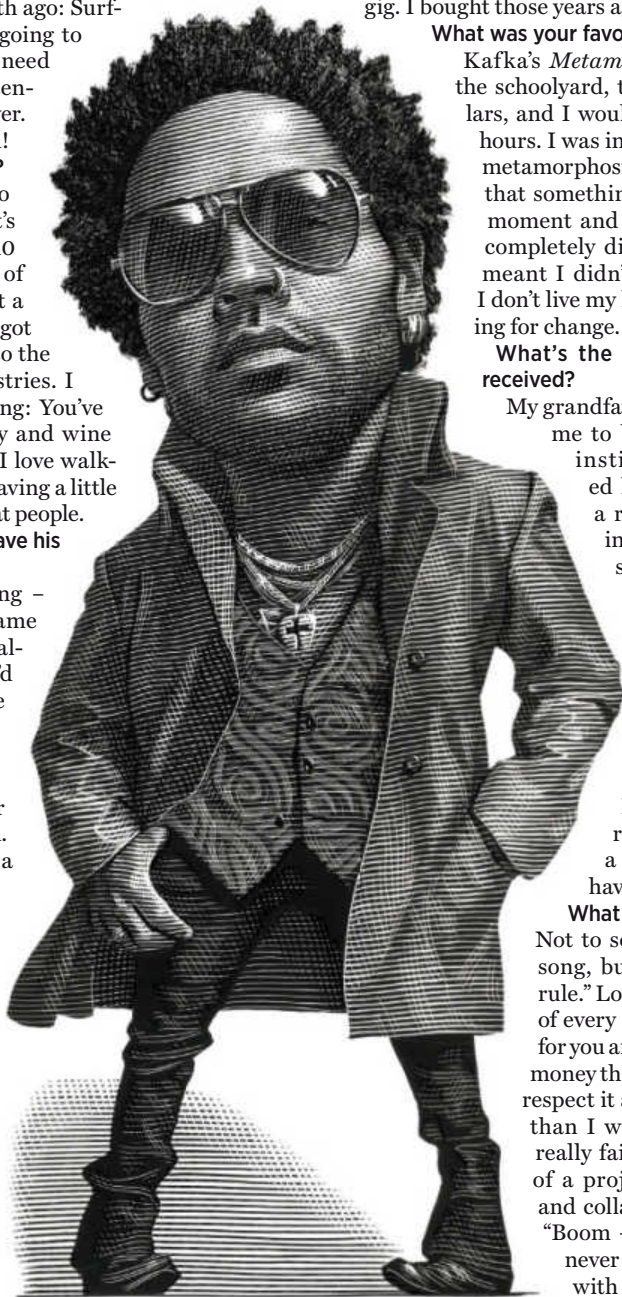
What's the best advice you have ever received?

My grandfather on my mom's side taught me to be authentic and follow my instincts. In 1982, I graduated high school and tried to get a record deal. But I was playing rock-based music and they said it wasn't commercial, that I should emulate whatever "black music" was happening at the time. I said no to about three major deals. One of them was to join a group of other African-American guys. Had I taken any of those deals, I wouldn't be talking with you right now. It might have lasted a record or two, and it would have been over.

What rule do you live by?

Not to sound corny quoting my own song, but the main idea is "let love rule." Love has to be the final outcome of every situation. If somebody works for you and they feel they deserve more money than they're getting, you have to respect it and say, "This might be more than I was prepared to give, but it's really fair to this person." At the end of a project, my longtime guitarist and collaborator Craig Ross will say, "Boom – this is what I need," and I never think about it. I never haggle with it.

INTERVIEW BY DAVID BROWNE



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